

FROM PRAGMATIC PROTEST TO STRATEGIC SILENCE?

Norway's Policy towards the Russo-Chechen Conflict

HILDE KRISTIN RØSSTAD

MA Thesis in History
Spring 2010
Department Of Archeology, Conservation and History
(IAKH)
University of Oslo

PREFACE:

I would first of all like to thank my academic supervisor Professor Hilde Henriksen Waage for her painstaking reading and invaluable comments. Thanks also to Jørgen Jenshaugen for his perusing of the final manuscript. Professor Pål Kolstø was very kind to comment on my background chapter despite a very busy schedule. For additional comments on the manuscript - and discussions related to it - I thank fellow students. Huge appreciation to fellow students for making the long days at the study hall worthwhile with discussions, encouragement, inspiration, ice cream and humour.

I would also like to thank my employer Anders Guldhaug at Damms Antikvariat for encouragement and understanding, giving me time off from dusty old books to pursue my education. I send my warm gratitude to my caring friends, and especially, to Lise Marie for her good sense of humour, her generosity, and for just being there throughout the, at times strenuous, process. Last but not least I would like to thank my family back home in Kristiansand for all their support, and for bearing over with a stressed out bookworm in this hectic period.

Hilde Kristin Røsstad
University of Oslo, Blindern, May 2010

In December, on a hillside near Grozny, I met with exhausted Chechen refugees while artillery shells rained down on the suburbs only a few kilometers away. Such experiences are a reminder that foreign policy is not merely concerned with impersonal forces. It concerns the lives of individual human beings – their needs, interests and rights. In fact it often concerns the most fundamental of all rights, the right to life.¹

¹ Statement on Foreign and Security Affairs to the Parliament by Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, 20.1.2000

INDEX

INDEX.....	VII
1: INTRODUCTION	1
WITH ATTENTION TO DETAIL	2
NORTHERN NEIGHBOURS IN A NEW ERA	4
SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES.....	6
NEIGHBOURS THROUGHOUT A THOUSAND YEARS.....	10
LITERATURE	12
SELECTING SOURCES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	15
2: RUSSO-CHECHEN: SYNONYMOUS TO CONFLICT?.....	17
CONQUEST AND RESISTANCE	18
THE DEPORTATION	20
INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL UNREST	21
DISSOLUTION	22
YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION	22
MASTERS OF WAR	25
GEOGRAPHY AND PETROLEUM	26
FAITH.....	27
RELIGION AND TERRORISM.....	29
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CASE OF CHECHNYA	32
THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT	33
3: NORWEGIAN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S INVASION OF CHECHNYA	35
NORWEGIAN RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION	35
WESTERN REACTIONS AND RESPONSES.....	38
SECESSION – AN UNWANTED CHILD OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS	41
GODAL'S LETTER TO KOSYREV	43
NATIONAL SECURITY AT THE CROSSROADS.....	45
PROMOTING NATO'S ENLARGEMENT	46
RUSSIA – A MOMENTUM OF WORRY IN NORWAY	49
NORWEGIAN HUMANITARIAN AID	52
NEW AND IMPROVED RUSSIA.....	54
PEACE ANNIVERSARY WITH THE CHECHEN CONFLICT AS BACKDROP	56
4: NORWEGIAN POLICY TOWARDS THE FIRST CHECHEN WAR.....	59
JANUARY 1996	59
PROMOTING RUSSIAN MEMBERSHIP – A DEMONSTRATION OF NORWEGIAN CONSENSUS ORIENTED FOREIGN POLICY	60
RUSSIA AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE	62
DISAPPOINTING RUSSIA – A DEMOCRACY MISCARRIED?	65
PRESIDENT YELTSIN'S VISIT TO NORWAY	68
TO WHAT END?	70
THE LEBED-MASKHADOV PEACE AGREEMENT.....	71
BJØRN TORE GODAL'S STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS	72
THE KILLING OF INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS EMPLOYEES IN NOVYE ATAGI	74
HUMANITARIAN AID.....	76
PEACE TREATIES, INDEPENDENCE AND OTHER FRAUDS	77
LABOUR OUT	78
CORRODING CHECHEN CONDITIONS	81
5: IN LIGHT OF THE 1999 OSCE - EXPERIENCE.....	83
NORWAY AND THE OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP	83
BANDS OF BANDITS AND RUSSIAN HAWKS.....	86
VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RISE TO POWER: A GREY BOLT FROM THE BLUE	88
A SECOND RUSSIAN INVASION OF CHECHNYA.....	90

REACTIONS TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION	90
KOSOVO AND CHECHNYA – DIFFERENCES IN SEARCH OF AN EXPLANATION	95
OSLO SUMMIT MEETING, 1-2 NOVEMBER 1999	97
ISTANBUL OSCE SUMMIT MEETING, STILL NOVEMBER 1999	99
RUSSIAN REACTIONS	101
EYEWITNESS TO CHECHNYA’S DESTRUCTION	103
CHANGING OF THE GUARDS	103
6: NORWAY’S POLICY TOWARDS THE SECOND WAR.....	107
WITH BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR.....	107
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SECOND WAR: PUTIN’S TURN OF THE SCREW	110
CONTINUED OSCE ENGAGEMENT FROM A NORWEGIAN PERSPECTIVE.....	111
RUSSIA AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE INTO THE RING FOR A SECOND ROUND	113
JAGLAND AND CHECHNYA	115
SPACES OF EXCEPTION	119
NORWAY - A TAG-ALONG IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL?.....	121
“THE SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE MUST CEASE”	124
STICKING TO SILENCE: AFTERWORD	127
7: STRATEGIC SILENCE? A CONCLUSION.....	131
WHAT CONFLICT?	131
THE RUSSO-CHECHEN CONFLICT IN NORWEGIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS.....	133
REGIONAL CONCERNS	134
INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES	135
ALL IS RELATIVE?.....	137
ONE DISCREPANCY TOO MANY	138
APPENDIX I: MAP OVER CHECHNYA	VII
APPENDIX II: MEDIA ANALYSIS.....	VIII
BIBLIOGRAPHY	VIII
PRIMARY SOURCES	VIII
INTERVIEWS:	viii
OTHER:	viii
PUBLISHED MATERIAL.....	VIII
INTERNET SOURCES:	viii
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:	x
LITERATURE	XV
BOOKS:.....	xv
OTHER:	xviii

1: INTRODUCTION

” The Norwegian people's deep respect for human worth means that the safeguarding and promotion of human rights is a cornerstone of all our policies.”²

Norwegian governments throughout the 1990s consistently promoted an image of Norway as a “peace nation”, a human rights advocate and the United Nations best friend and supporter.³ In accordance with this notion, Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal’s comments on the recent Russian military invasion of Chechnya, in early January 1995, were robust and highly critical. Boris Yeltsin, Russia’s first president and leader of a nascent democracy in Russia, had launched a full-scale war on one of Russia’s own autonomous republics in December 1994. This was unwelcome news that worried Norwegian authorities. Godal informed the Norwegian press that he had sent a letter to his Russian counterpart strongly condemning the Russian military invasion and the subsequent disregard of human rights in the small Chechen republic.⁴

However, Godal’s and other internationally expressed concerns and condemnations of Russian military action seemingly did not change Russian authorities’ approach to the situation. Opportunities to sanction Russia occurred several times during the 1990s. However, none of these were exploited.⁵ Norway’s succeeding governments, on their part, consistently rejected the use of measures or sanctions other than verbal criticism. Norway was also, throughout the period, just as consistent in its explicit recognition of Russian territorial integrity, which included Chechnya, and Russia’s right to fight terrorism within own borders.

Russo-Chechen peace treaties were signed in 1996 and 1997, however, these led in the end to little other than a hiatus between 1996 and 1999. A second war in Chechnya was initiated in 1999. The second war was officially declared over by Russian President Vladimir Putin in early 2001. However, due to constant armed activity in Chechnya, it has been difficult to proclaim the end of the second war, despite official Russian declarations. Since 1994 thousands of people have been killed, and thousands more are still missing in the small republic. The Russo-Chechen conflict has overall received little attention in spite of being one

² Statement to the Parliament on human rights by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal 10.10.1996; http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/regjeringen-brundtland-iii/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/1996/statement_to_the_storting_on_human.html?id=261849 (13.5.2010)

³ Even Lange, Helge Pharø and Øyvind Østerud (ed.), *Vendepunkter i Norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen* [Turning points in Norwegian Foreign Affairs: New international conditions after the Cold War], Oslo 2009: 9-10.

⁴ «Tiltagende vestlig kritikk av Russland» [Increasing Western Criticism of Russia], *Morgenbladet*, 13.1.1995; «Utenriksminister Godal protesterer i Kreml» [Foreign Minister Godal protests in the Kremlin], *NTB*, 9.1.1995

⁵ James Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*, London 2007: 131

of the gravest humanitarian situations of the 1990s and 2000s, not least in regards of the massive human rights violations.⁶

The quest of the present thesis is to explain a possible discrepancy between Norwegian governments' presentation of Norway as a "peace nation" and human rights advocate, versus Norway's *actual* conduct in foreign affairs. This postulated discrepancy will be examined in light of how three succeeding Norwegian governments related to the Russo-Chechen conflict. Put in the form of an idiom: did Norway practice what it preached concerning human rights advocacy in relation to the Russo-Chechen conflict and its massive human rights violations? With this in mind, what kind of policy did the Norwegian government conduct towards the Russo-Chechen conflict throughout the 1990s until 2001, and why did Norway choose this approach?⁷

WITH ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Before providing a theoretical framework it can be useful to establish which factors dominated Norwegian foreign policy in general, and towards Russia in particular, in the 1990s. By doing this, it is possible to pose the question of what factors dominated Norwegian policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict.⁸

A White Paper headed by the Labour party's Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg in 1989-90, is often spotlighted in explaining Norwegian Foreign Policy in the 90s. The White Paper, *Development trends in the international society and their effects on Norwegian foreign policy*, sometimes referred to as was a defined strategy for Norwegian foreign policy in the upcoming years.⁹ A long list of national, regional, and global foreign policy and interests and aims followed.¹⁰ It purported that Norway should strive to initiate processes, to be active and creative, and have a facilitator role in peace-processes.¹¹ The paper underlined the advantage of Norway being a small country without a colonial past, and other aspects of great powers deemed unfortunate in the 1990s international community.¹²

⁶ Anne Marie Austbø (ed.), *Whose Responsibility? Protection of Chechen internally displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees. Report by the Norwegian Refugee Council*, Oslo 2005: 12.

⁷ When Norway is used as actor in this thesis, Norway equals the Norwegian government.

⁸ The term policy is here used in a very general manner to describe the act of relating and reacting to the Russo-Chechen conflict.

⁹ Olav Riste, *Norway's Foreign Relations: A History* 2005: 284-285

¹⁰ Rolf Tamnes, *Oljealder: 1965-1995*, bd. 6 av *Norsk Utenrikspolitisk historie [Oil Age: 1965-1995]*, vol. 6 of *Norway's Foreign Political History*, Oslo 1997: 341-349; Riste 2005: 284-285.

¹¹ Tamnes 1997: 341.

¹² Hilde Henriksen Waage, 'Norwegians? Who needs Norwegians?' *Explaining the Oslo Back Channel: Norway's Political Past in the Middle East*, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Evaluation Report 9, Oslo 2000: 68; Tamnes, 1997: 341.

Norway was also engaged as peace facilitators in several processes in the 1990s and considered its engagements in many ways successful. It is almost possible to claim that some of the enthusiastic Norwegian participators were soaring on a “peace-high”.¹³ Jan Egeland’s claim that foreign policy had become Norway’s best export article was perhaps not all true, but efforts were clearly made in the spirit of the saying.¹⁴ Norwegian historian Rolf Tamnes has called this on peace and development *engagement policy*.¹⁵ The engagement policy can be characterized as an ethical foreign policy driven by idealism and value diplomacy, such as human rights activism, humanitarian aid, and environmental issues. The Norwegian peacemaking efforts can be seen as an attempt to find a place in the post-Cold War world. It had become less certain what kind of interests and position a small country like Norway had, and what strategies was best to promote a small country’s position in an international context.¹⁶ The Norwegian MFA lost its explicit security political mandate it had been custodian of during the Cold War.¹⁷ However, by establishing a position as important peace facilitators, the Norwegian government, especially the MFA, earned itself a new and important mandate.¹⁸

Uncertainties nonetheless characterized the situation in the 1990s. Qualms were linked to the new relations with a new version of NATO and the post-Soviet Russia in a reforming state. Norway was still firmly positioned within the alliance after NATO’s summit meeting in London in 1990. However, it was an unfamiliar situation for Norway that its allies no longer regarded the Northern areas and Norway itself with a security focus.¹⁹ Other areas were perceived more challenging by NATO, and the security concerns in the northern areas had to a large degree become local rather than international concerns.²⁰ An additional momentum was that the Norwegian people had turned down membership in the European Union (EU) in a national referendum in 1994. This was the second time the Norwegians chose to remain outside

¹³ «De sa vi ikke kunne klare det», *NY TID*, 15.6.2001.

¹⁴ Waage 2000: 68; «Norsk utenrikspolitikk selger», *Aftenposten*, 31.3.1995.

¹⁵ “Engasjementspolitikken.”; Tamnes, 1997: 19, 344.

¹⁶ Janne Haaland Matlary, *Verdidiplomati – kilde til makt?* [Value diplomacy: A source to power] Makt- og demokratiutredningens rapportserie, Rapport 46, august 2002
<http://www.sv.uio.no/mutr/publikasjoner/rapp2002/Rapport46.html> (13.5.2010)

¹⁷ Jon Harald Sande Lie, «Utvikling, frivillige organisasjoner og utenrikspolitikk» [Development, voluntary Organizations and Foreign Policy], in Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending, *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis: Aktører og prosesser* [Norwegian Foreign Policy Practice: Actors and Processes], Oslo 2006: 138.

¹⁸ Hilde Henriksen Waage, «Fredspolitikk i Midtøsten», in Even Lange, Helge Pharo and Øyvind Østerud (ed.), *Vendepunkter i norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen* [Turningpoints in Norwegian Foreign Affairs: New International conditions after the Cold War], Oslo 2009: 158-159.

¹⁹ Tamnes 1997: 138-139; Riste 2005: 228-229.

²⁰ John Kristen Skogan, «Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk: En oversikt» [Norwegian Security Policy: An Overview], in Jon Hovi og Raino Malnes (ed.), *Normer og Makt: Innføring i internasjonal politikk* [Norms and Power: Introduction to International Politics], Oslo 2003: 43.

the European community. The first time was in 1972.²¹ Both of Norway's immediate Scandinavian neighbours, Sweden and Denmark, joined the EU at this point. Norway feared being sidelined, as the EU was attempting to establish foreign policy coordination through the European Political Cooperation (EPC). The EPC aimed at revitalizing the Western European Union (WEU) as its defence and security arm in Europe. As a non-member of the EU Norway only obtained consultation arrangements with the EPC and associate membership of the WEU.²²

NORTHERN NEIGHBOURS IN A NEW ERA

Three sets of factors have been distinguished as essential in Russo-Norwegian relations in the 1990s. First, Russia's relation to the West in general, and to NATO and USA in particular, affected Norway's relation with Russia. A consequence of Norway's NATO membership and the close security cooperation Norway has had with the USA since the Second World War. During the Cold War, the international framework was paramount to Russo-Norwegian relations. In Norway the political turnabout in Russia in the late eighties and early nineties led to a sort of euphoric feeling towards the Russians, as the final wrap up of Soviet communism altered the Norwegian view of Russia. The general Norwegian conception in the early nineties was that Norwegians and Russians could return to their *natural* and pre-Cold War relations.²³ The ideological change that occurred within Russia with the dissolution of the USSR did not necessarily change the essential international framework. Structural factors, such as Russia great power status and Norway's membership in NATO, an alliance that Russia continued to recognize as an obstacle to own security interests, remained unchanged.²⁴

Second, Russo-Norwegian bilateral relations were affected by the Russian domestic situation. Russia experienced tendencies of a state in dissolution during the 1990s, due to huge economical problems and internal fractions. The struggle for political power, prestige and pressured resources often affected the surrounding world.²⁵

Third, the relations were affected by Norwegian policy in the high north. There were several issues where Norway and Russia was opposed to each other in the border region of the northern areas in both land and at sea. Among them was the Barents Sea, of massive

²¹ Tamnes 1997: 147.

²² Ibid: 144.

²³ Geir Hønneland, «Vårt bilde av Russerne»[Our perception of the Russians], i Lars Rowe and Geir Hønneland(edt.), *Russlandsbilder: Nye debattinnlegg om nabolik i nordområdene*, Bergen. 2007: 16.

²⁴ Torunn Laugen, «Mot et kaldere klima? Utviklingen av det bilaterale forholdet mellom Norge og Russland på 1990-tallet», *Internasjonal politikk*, 59, 1, 2001: 92

²⁵ Laugen, 2001: 92

importance to both Norway and Russia, has been a disputed area for many decades. Fish and petroleum, Norway's two main exports, are both linked to the sea. This has had, and still has, important implications for Norwegian foreign policy.²⁶ Unlike the mainland border, established in 1826, the bilateral maritime boundary has been somewhat problematic defined and less consequent.²⁷ The disagreement boiled down to diverging opinions on how to most properly delimitate the maritime borders. Norway wanted to use the median line, whilst Russia wanted to use a meridian based sector principle.²⁸ They both favour the principle that will leave their own country the most area and resources.

In the 1970s Norway and the Soviet Union had managed to reach some arrangement. In 1978 they agreed on a so-called Grey Zone where they were responsible for their own vehicles and citizens; an area that was not accounted for, but considered an international free-zone.²⁹

Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg initiated a new approach to the northern areas through the Euro Arctic Barents Sea Region along with Russia, Sweden, and Finland.³⁰ The Barents Region was officially inaugurated on 11 January 1993 through the signing of the *Kirkenes-declaration*.³¹ The main areas of co-operation were environment, student-exchange and promoting commerce. There were several strategies behind the project. Foremost to bring Russia closer into the European sphere and make the Northern area an interesting place to the rest of the world, also after the vigilance of the Cold War was gone.³² The governance of the fishing resources was kept within a Russo-Norwegian bilateral cooperation that had existed in more or less the same form since 1976.³³

The post-Cold War Russo-Norwegian relations in the high north were nevertheless characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability.³⁴ The Norwegian authorities worked hard to establish a peaceful and cooperative link with the Russians in this new epoch. The Russian presidential candidate Boris Yeltsin was in Norway, as in other Western nations, celebrated as a good man and a hope for a possible Russian democracy. When Yeltsin won the elections, the

²⁶ Tore Nyhamar, «Norsk Utenrikspolitikk i en ny tid»[Norwegian Foreign Policy in a New Era], in Jon Hovi og Raino Malnes (ed.), *Normer og Makt: Innføring i internasjonal politikk*[Norms and Power: Introduction to International Politics], Oslo 2003: 43.

²⁷ Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen, *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo. 2004: 24.

²⁸ Tamnes, 1997: 291-293; Riste, 2001: 250.

²⁹ Tamnes, 1997: 300; Riste, 2001: 214-215, 224-225.

³⁰ Geir Hønneland, *Barents-brytninger: Norsk nordområdepolitikk etter den kalde krigen*[Barents waves: Norwegian High North Policy after the Cold War], Kristiansand 2005: 14.

³¹ Tamnes 1997: 334-335.

³² Ibid: 334-335.

³³ Ibid: 295, 332.

³⁴ Riste 2005: 278.

expectations for his future achievements were running high.³⁵ However, Yeltsin was soon on a warpath towards Russia's own Parliament and towards the small mountain republic, Chechnya.

Norway had many reasons to react and respond to the outburst of the Russo-Chechen armed conflict. It concerned security in its largest neighbouring state Russia, it occurred within an OSCE member state, and *moreover* the conflict caused violations of many of the universal values that Norway claimed it stood for and promoted.³⁶ Nonetheless, Political Scientist Tore Nyhamar explicitly claims that Norwegian considerations for human rights were, in the course of the Russo-Chechen conflict, subordinated the fear of "falling out" with Russia over matters that did not directly concern Norway.³⁷

SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Russo-Norwegian relations are often analyzed in terms of basic *realist* thinking. Small Norway, with its estimated 4.5 million people cannot outrun its geography as neighbour to Russia, a regional great power. The bilateral relation between the two was, and still is, asymmetric, especially with regards to military capabilities and human resources. According to basic theory of *realism* the state is the most central actor in international politics. The world is also perceived as anarchical due to the lack of a superior global authority with executive power. A following realistic supposition is that the distribution of material power establishes states' room for manoeuvre. Whereas a great power can do what it has the power to do, a small state accepts what it must accept. In this perspective a small state will always have to tread carefully in relations with great powers. Realism theory stresses military and economical capacities. A state's capacity to maximize its own security and power through economic and military means is in this perspective decisive. Norway's effort to balance the asymmetrical relation with Russia is apparent through the import of security through NATO and close relations with the USA.³⁸

An additional theoretical perspective is based on *liberal* theory of international relations, which stresses interstate integration and interdependence. This perspective was, and is, visible in Norway's approach to foreign affairs through its confidence in economical integration and cooperation as conflict resolving factors in international relations. The global

³⁵ «Vesten hilser Jeltsin velkommen» [The West greets Yeltsin Welcome], *NTB*, 23.8.1989; «Boris demokrat», [Boris Democrat], *Nordlys*, 8.3.1990;

³⁶ Phone Interview with Knut Vollebæk, 17.2.2010

³⁷ Nyhamar 2003: 178. [Under den russiske krigføringen i Tsjetsjenia i 1995 og 1999-2000 var hensynet til menneskerettigheter underordnet hensynet til ikke å legge seg ut med Russland i spørsmål som ikke angår Norge direkte.]

³⁸ Svein Vigeland Rottem, Geir Hønneland og Leif Christian Jensen, *Småstat og energistormakt: Norges sikkerhetspolitiske rolle i nord* [Small State and Energy Great Power: Norway's Security Political role in the High North], Bergen 2008: 24-25.

anarchy becomes modified in this perspective, because the actors recognize that cooperation is the best solution for everyone. In an analysis of Norway's policy in the northern areas the Norwegian conviction that inter-cultural and economic cooperation was stabilizing is central. The Euro Arctic Barents Sea Region cooperation and other similar international organizations and treaties are examples of this. The United Nations (UN) is also such an organization that clears the ground for mutual understanding and agreements. That is not to say that this forum does not allow national interests on the agenda, but the point of departure is an understanding that mutual obligations and treaties affects and "frames" eventual conflicts in international politics. Liberal theory recognizes conflict potential in interstate dynamics, while stressing that smaller actors have the possibility to affect their own room of manoeuvre.³⁹

A constructivist based perspective claims that national, regional and international norms and perception affect the conduct in foreign affairs on any given level. The power to define what conduct is legitimate or not and what is morally right and wrong can be considered a structural ideological power. An actor can "sell" a good idea, or convince others of something and thereby attain power of definition.⁴⁰ In regards of this thesis it can be helpful to discern "what conflict" the Norwegian Government related to and how. It is important to be aware of narrative constructions of conflict based on prejudice and myths, and show plain awareness of the fact that there are several ways to present a given conflict. This is because the version "bought" by the external actors relating to it is fairly decisive on *how* they relate to it. The following is a simplified example of such a perspective: When Norway supported the "humanitarian bombing" in Kosovo it was perceived as legitimate, because the Kosovo-Albanian people were perceived as threatened by genocide. The Chechens were not perceived to be under the threat of genocide, and Chechnya's secessionist regime was also perceived as nesting terrorists and mafia enterprise. Concerning the latter, it would be regarded as Russia's legitimate right to protect territorial integrity and security for its citizens. Thus, it was not legitimate for external actors to intervene.

Questions of national identity and legitimate behavior and conduct are central factors of a constructivist perspective. A Norwegian perception of the Norwegian "peace tradition" and "peace nation" is well established, although thoroughly contested both inside and outside Norway.⁴¹ This perspective implies that perceptions of one's own role affects and "frames"

³⁹ Rottem, Hønneland og Jensen 2008: 25-27.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 23.

⁴¹ Tamnes 1997: 343; «De sa vi ikke kunne klare det», *NY TID*, 15.6.2001; Sverre Lodgaard, «Helhetsperspektiver på norsk utenrikspolitikk», *Internasjonal Politikk*, no. 3, 2002; Sverre Lodgaard, «Helhetsperspektiver på norsk utenrikspolitikk», *Internasjonal Politikk*, no. 2, 2007: 279-285; Halvard Leira, «Norske selvbilder-norsk

Norwegian defense and security policy. The ideas of Norway as “the good keeper”, i.e. the sensible and wise administer of the northern areas suits such a self image perfectly. On the regional level it refers to the good historical Russo-Norwegian relations and on the international level sovereignty and states’ administrative responsibility. It is strategically important for Norway to show or convince the world that Norway is the “most dependable keeper” of the great resources of the North. The international normative environment is central. The idea of Norway as human rights advocate also suits Norway’s self image. Norway presents itself as an inexhaustible promoter of human rights and criticizes regimes for human rights violations across the globe. However, Norway has not tended to criticize Russia. Here, Norway cannot historically refer to itself as critical and outspoken on human rights violations.⁴²

Joseph Nye Jr. Professor in Political Science established the terms hard and soft power in “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics”.⁴³ Hard power is understood to pressurize others, through economic or military means, to act against their own will. Hard power strategies are neither possible nor desirable from a Norwegian perspective. The exception is that hard power has some relevance through alliances, such as NATO. More important to Norway is soft power. The term is based on a perception that political actors, states for instance, can affect other actors conduct, action and interests through ideological and cultural advances. To Nye these acts can often be considered strategic. Nevertheless, they also need to be considered valuable by other actors. The international, regional and national normative environment is given much importance. Nye referred to Norway by stating that the Norwegian role in peace negotiations and similar engagement can increase Norway’s room of manoeuvre, and facilitate access to important decision arenas.⁴⁴ It thus contests the idea of Norwegian foreign policy of peace facilitating and humanitarian- and development aid as something being purely altruistic.

With the transnational NGO-organizations, global media, and the World Wide Web, which accelerated to new heights through the nineties, there was created an *international* public that challenged the traditional inside-outside divide between domestic and foreign policy. The term public diplomacy refers to the fact that the public, to a much greater degree than earlier, discusses foreign and security political matters, and the media reports, especially on conflicts, in a much more direct way. Foreign policy is now also performed in public, not only in closed

utenrikspolitik», *Internasjonal Politikk*, no. 2, 2007: 285-288; Mark Curtis, *Doublethink: The two faces of Norway’s foreign and development policy*, Forum for Utvikling og Miljø, Oslo 2010, <http://www.forumfor.no/Artikler/5677.html>

⁴² Rottem, Hønneland og Jensen 2008: 27-28.

⁴³ Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*, New York 2004.

⁴⁴ Rottem, Hønneland og Jensen 2008: 27-28.

sessions by professional diplomats and politicians.⁴⁵ It has become possible for people other than the political elite to be updated on conflicts through television and internet, and see pictures directly from war zones and follow the development from day to day. The NGO's reportage and criticism of political leaders has gained wider legitimacy in the early 1990s. This, however, changed somewhat with the US led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, where Western authorities was less willing to listen to criticism uttered by human rights advocates.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, because of human rights focus in the 1990s, it became more important for political leaders to show awareness of human rights in public. In conflicts with severe human right violations, such as the Russo-Chechen conflict, it became harder for the foreign policy makers and actors, to keep matters withdrawn from the public, at least without making some sort of effort to legitimize their actions, or lack of action, through open discussions.⁴⁷ Due to this development soft power can be considered strategically more important.

A timeline of seven years has been useful to discern developments in the Norwegian policy throughout *two* Russo-Chechen wars, *three* succeeding Norwegian governments and *a regime change* in Russia. This thesis' main focus is events that took place from 1994 until 2001. It would be possible to go back to 1991, when Chechnya declared its sovereignty. However, I find it better to start with the Russian invasion in 1994 because of the explicit Norwegian reactions that followed. The analysis ends in 2001 for two main reasons: First, the second war was officially declared over by President Vladimir Putin. Second, a discussion on the period after the attack on the World Trade Center, and what is by many seen as a change of paradigm in international politics, would go beyond the scope of this thesis' time and pages. Nonetheless, the timeline has been stretched here and there to be able to explain particularities, or place them in a context. By doing this it is also possible to point out some of the development after 9/11, without making a thorough analysis.

In order to have a handle on what kind of conflict Norwegian authorities were relating to, Russo-Chechen relations and the conflict is presented in Chapter 2, before the empirical chapters. To be able to discern factors of Russo-Norwegian relations, which may have affected Norway's policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict, it is essential to examine how Norway related to the Federal State of Russia in that period. Therefore, a short historical background of Russo-Norwegian relations will be presented in the following part of the introduction.

⁴⁵ Matlary 2002: <http://www.sv.uio.no/mutr/publikasjoner/rapp2002/Rapport46.html>

⁴⁶ Hughes 2007: 135.

⁴⁷ Matlary, 2002: <http://www.sv.uio.no/mutr/publikasjoner/rapp2002/Rapport46.html>

NEIGHBOURS THROUGHOUT A THOUSAND YEARS

Contrary to the Chechen people, the Norwegians have usually enjoyed overall peaceful relations with the Russians.⁴⁸ The following excerpt of Russo-Norwegian relations is in compliance with the glossy image that is brought forth when Norwegian and Russian political leaders meet. It is possible to trace relations of trade and royal intermarriage between Norway and Russia through written sources a thousand years back.⁴⁹ In the 18th and 19th century an annual trade market, since called the *Pomor-trade*, brought the cultures together. More than 300 hundred ships left Russia for northern parts of Norway every summer, to trade Russian flour for Norwegian fish.⁵⁰ Naturally, given geography and trade interaction, Norwegian decision makers in Oslo were more sceptical towards the Russians than their northern countrymen.⁵¹

After a short period of independence from Denmark in the 18th century, Norway entered a union with Sweden.⁵² During the Swedish-Norwegian Union, the awareness of “the Russian threat” was said to be particularly felt in Swedish elite circles. It was claimed that the Swedish authorities used this “threat”, i.e. ‘if Norway stood by itself, Russia could invade Norway’, to keep Norway in line. The same Russophobe ideas were however also widespread in Norway.⁵³ In the early 1900s Russia favoured Norway’s dissolution from Sweden because it would weaken Sweden’s potential power.⁵⁴ Thus, Russia was the first of the great European powers to acknowledge the national sovereignty of Norway on 29 October 1905.⁵⁵ Norway was correspondingly among the first states in Europe to recognize the Soviet regime as the legitimate government of Russia following the Russian Revolution.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ Alexander Kan og Jens Petter Nielsen, «Naboer i det høye nord: Tusenårig samkvem og samarbeid» [Neighbours in the High North: A Thousand years of co-existence and cooperation], in Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen (ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år* [Norway and Russia: Neighbours through a 1000 years], Oslo 2004: 25.

⁴⁹ Tatjana Dzjakson, «Norge og Rus-riket i vikingtiden: Normannerspørsmålet» [Norway and the Rus-kingdom in the Viking age: the question of the Normans], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo 2004: 40.

⁵⁰ Tatjana Schrader, «Pomorhandelen.» [The Pomor-trade] I Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo 2004: 92.

⁵¹ Kan og Nielsen, 2004: 26.

⁵² Vadim Roginskij, «1814 og 1905- to viktige år i Norges historie» [1814 and 1905 – two important years in the history of Norway], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen,(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo 2004: 131.

⁵³ Jens Petter Nielsen, «Norske bilder av Russland i lys av den svensk-norske unionen» [Norwegian perceptions of Russia in the light of the Swedish-Norwegian union], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo 2004: 149-50.

⁵⁴ Roginskij 2004: 131.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 133.

⁵⁶ Øyvind Nordsletten og Aleksander Panov, «Trek fra de diplomatiske forbindelser mellom Norge og Russland» [from the diplomatic relations between Norway and Russia], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo 2004: 400.

During the Second World War, the Germans kept 90,000 Soviet citizens in Norway as prisoners of war. There was a great deal of interconnection between these and the Norwegian civilian population, which tried to help them with food and refuge.⁵⁷ In 1944, the Red Army liberated the eastern part of Finnmark and as is often highlighted since, *withdrew* from this area the following year.⁵⁸

Norway's relations with the Soviet Union (USSR) were strained because of the Cold War. The struggle for world dominance between the USSR and the USA followed from 1945 all the way into Mikhail S. Gorbachev's period in the 1980s. Caught between the two superpowers, Norway at first avoided, as best as possible, quarrels between the USA and the USSR. What has been called a *bridge-building* position is also regarded to have been as a general disengagement from international affairs.⁵⁹ After rumours that Norway might receive the same "threatening invitation" as Eastern European states and Finland, Norway's position changed.⁶⁰ In 1949 Norway openly chose sides with the USA in the conflict by entering the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and thus opposed the USSR-based defence organization, the Warsaw Pact.

Sharing 196 kilometres of common border with Russia is a constant factor in Norwegian foreign policy, and the peripheral geographical situation, another. Norway was strategically important in the Cold War, as the only NATO country with a common border to the USSR. The small country thus "enjoyed" a central position. According to historian Olav Riste, two sets of formulae determined the course of Norwegian security policy: "In relation to the Soviet Union, the 'deterrence' obtained through membership of the Atlantic Alliance would be paired with efforts of 'reassurance' that such membership was strictly for defensive purposes."⁶¹ Self-imposed restrictions became a key term in Norwegian foreign policy in the North. Consequently, Norway was among other averse to having NATO-exercises in the high north and did not want to have nuclear arms stationed in Norway.⁶²

The self-imposed restrictions did not only concern NATO and "bases policy", but also other levels. Norway, for instance, was reluctant to criticize the USSR of maltreatment of

⁵⁷ Marianne Neerland Soleim, «Sovjetiske krigsfanger i Norge 1941 – 1945[Soviet prisoner of war in Norway 1941-1945]», i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo 2004: 400.

⁵⁸ Mikhail Suprun, «Frigjøringen av Øst-Finnmark i 1944»[the Liberation of Eastern Finnmark in 1944], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo 2004: 414-15.

⁵⁹ Riste, 2005: 185.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 199.

⁶¹ Ibid: 210.

⁶² Tamnes 1997: 100-117; Skogan 2003: 32-34.

Christians, Jews and political dissidents, while Norwegian governments would strongly condemn other regimes elsewhere.⁶³ The tense situation that had been an omnipresent factor of Russo-Norwegian relations during the Cold War was in part relieved when Mikhail S. Gorbachev came to power in 1985. Gorbachev was of the opinion that the USSR needed reform to manage economically and politically. His government launched many broad reforms in Russian society, *Perestroika*, and promoted openness on many levels, *Glasnost*.⁶⁴ Gorbachev was also more sympathetic to the West than his predecessors and strengthened diplomatic relations with USA, and Western European nations.⁶⁵

The reforms and the openness undermined the structures that the USSR was built on, and the Soviet empire started crumbling. Added to the situation came an international wave of nationalism over Europe making it harder to keep federations such as the USSR and Yugoslavia together. Smaller scale conflicts were rumbling beneath the surface. Some of the conflict had been frozen by the Cold War and some were seemingly a consequence of the dissolution itself. Chechnya could be placed in the latter category.⁶⁶ In the USSR the forces promoting reform, secession and national independence eventually managed to overcome the conservative communist forces trying to reform the USSR in function. International political relations changed drastically with the dissolution of the USSR and the change brought with it uncertainty to the international order.⁶⁷ Part of the changes was the wars erupting *inside* nation states. The questions of how the international community should deal with conflicts, such as the Russo-Chechen, soon arise. Reactions and responses towards the conflicts would vary greatly among Western government. As all conflicts and situations are different this can be regarded as obvious, however at times it seems as Western governments operated with a double set of morals.

LITERATURE

This is, as far as I have been able to find out, the first thorough study on how Norway related to the Chechen conflict. James Hughes, professor of Comparative Politics states in his book, *Chechnya: from Nationalism to Jihad* that, previous studies of the international aspects of the

⁶³ Tamnes, 1997: 31.

⁶⁴ Torbjørn L. Knutsen, «Politikk og praksis i historisk lys.»[Politics and Practice in Historic Light], in Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann og Ole Jacob Sending(red.), *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis: Aktører og prosesser*, Oslo 2006: 257.

⁶⁵ The West is defined as the members of the NATO in 1994; Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Germany and the USA + Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland.

⁶⁶ Hughes 2007: 198.

⁶⁷ Tamnes, 1997: 134.

Chechen conflict, focused on how Russian foreign policy makers had managed the conflict internationally: “The determinants of the Foreign Policy of other states [...] on the question of Chechnya are a much-neglected field of study.”⁶⁸ In line with Hughes, no overwhelming amount has been written on this specific topic in Norway. Although, there are several Norwegian authors that tap into it, while exploring the Chechen conflict in general or Norwegian foreign policy per se.

Aage Borchgrevink mentions Norwegian decision makers’ lack of response to the conflict and general tendency to ignore it in his book *Den usynlige krigen: Reiser i Tsjetsjenia, Ingushetia og Dagestan* [The Invisible War: Travels through Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan].⁶⁹ Ingvald Godal has also noted what he considers political silence brought to the fore in his book *Tsjetsjenia: Der enkene blir selvmordsbombere* [Chechnya: Where the widows become suicide bombers].⁷⁰ Similarly Siri Lill Mannes with *Livvakt i helvete – Aleksandr og krigen i Tsjetsjenia* [Bodyguard in Hell – Aleksandr and the War in Chechnya]⁷¹ and Åsne Seierstad with stories from the Chechen war in *De Krenkede: Fortellinger fra Tsjetsjenia* [Angel of Grozny: Inside Chechnya]⁷², have explicitly criticized the way the Chechen conflict has been overlooked.

Rolf Tamnes’ book *Oljealder 1965-1995 i Norsk utenrikspolitisk historie*, bind 6 [Oil age 1965-1995]⁷³, Olav Riste’s *Norwegian Foreign Relations: A History*⁷⁴, and *Vendepunkter i Norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen* [Turning points in Norwegian Foreign Affairs: New International Conditions after the Cold War]⁷⁵ have provided a general historical backdrop on Norwegian foreign policy. I have also used several articles from the Norwegian publication *Internasjonal Politikk*.

The solid collaborational historical work, and exhibition catalogue, “*Norge-Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*” [Norway-Russia: neighbours through a 1000 years], has supplied background material for Russo-Norwegian historical relations. Norwegian relations with Russia in the 1990s are to a certain extent covered in literature on fields of national security, and the cooperation in the Barents Sea. All the books mentioned above on Norwegian Foreign

⁶⁸ James Hughes, *Chechnya: from Nationalism to Jihad*, London 2007.

⁶⁹ Aage Storm Borchgrevink, *Den usynlige krigen: Reiser i Tsjetsjenia, Ingushetia og Dagestan*, Oslo 2007.

⁷⁰ Ingvald Godal, *Tsjetsjenia: Der enkene blir selvmordsbombere*, Oslo 2003.

⁷¹ Siri Lill Mannes, *Livvakt i helvete*, Oslo 2006.

⁷² Åsne Seierstad, *De krenkede: Fortellinger fra Tsjetsjenia*, Oslo: 2007.

⁷³ Rolf Tamnes, *Oljealder: 1965-1995*, bd. 6 av *Norsk Utenrikspolitisk historie* [Oil Age: 1965-1995, vol. 6 of Norway’s Foreign Political History], Oslo 1997.

⁷⁴ Olav Riste, *Norwegian Foreign Relations: A History*, Oslo 2005.

⁷⁵ Even Lange, Helge Pharo and Øyvind Østerud (ed.), *Vendepunkter i Norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen* [Turning points in Norwegian Foreign Affairs: New International conditions after the Cold War], Oslo 2009.

Policy covers Russo-Norwegian relations. Professor II and Senior Researcher of Political Science Geir Hønneland have written several books on Norwegian-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War.⁷⁶ *Småstat og energistormakt: Norges sikkerhetspolitiske rolle i nord* [Small State and Energy Great Power: Norway's Security Political Role in the North], co-written by Hønneland has provided most parts of the thesis theoretical approach and some background material.⁷⁷ Hønneland focuses more explicitly than many on the fascinating perspective of perception between the two neighbour states.⁷⁸

There exists today a fairly large amount of literature on the Russo-Chechen conflict and the perceptions of the conflict are as many as works or more. I have had to be selective, and I have used three works as main background material. The first is “*Chechnya: Tombstone of Russia*” by journalist and historian Anatol Lieven.⁷⁹ The book is comprehensive and deals with the North Caucasian history and the contemporary social condition and politics in both Russia and Chechnya. He also provides personal experience of the conditions during the first war, and firsthand knowledge about many of the main protagonists he met when he stayed there. However, Lieven, as many others, end up describing the conflict with a mythological tendency.

In *Chechnya: from Nationalism to Jihad*, Professor of Comparative Politics James Hughes takes a more sober approach.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, he analyzes the history and cultural factors of Russo-Chechen relations, which have often been taken for granted as causes, but with a critical distance. In addition, he adds a theoretical approach, the dynamics of conflict, which presents an alternative to the many “either – or” explanations, showing instead the dynamics and development of both protagonist and circumstances. “*Chechnya: from Past to Future*”, is a reader edited by Richard Sakwa. The volume are brought together by leading experts from all sides of the conflict, with Western, Russian and Chechen perspectives on the conflict, explaining the conflict's context and causes.⁸¹ In addition, I have used several other books to explain particularities, or more thoroughly comprehend the context.

⁷⁶ Geir Hønneland, *Barents-brytninger: Norsk områdepolitikk etter den kalde krigen*, Kristiansand. 2005; *Vårt bilde av Russerne*, Kristiansand 2002.

⁷⁷ Svein Vigeland Rottem, Geir Hønneland og Leif Christian Jensen, *Småstat og energistormakt: Norges sikkerhetspolitiske rolle i nord*, Bergen 2008.

⁷⁸ Hønneland, 2005: 106-165.

⁷⁹ Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russia*, London 1998.

⁸⁰ James Hughes, *Chechnya: from Nationalism to Jihad*, London 2007.

⁸¹ Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005.

SELECTING SOURCES and METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This is an empirical study and the thesis' analysis is based on qualitative research. The narrative builds on analysis of newspapers articles and primary sources such as, statements to the Norwegian Parliament, speeches, and whitepapers, and some interviews. In order to answer my research questions I have used diverging and broadly based basic theoretical approaches to analyze the source material I have had at hand. This is done along with a reading of secondary literature, to put the material into a wider context.

The topic of this thesis made it natural to explore the Royal Norwegian MFA's archive. However, after seven months of having my application processed, I was unfortunately denied any access to this material, on the basis that the MFA does not give access to matters of current interest and affairs still in process.⁸² The archive of the Norwegian Parliament (*Stortinget*) has been of great use, although I have mainly looked at published sources. I have drawn on the Foreign Ministers Annual Address on Foreign Policy to the Parliament and the following debates, but also other statements and speeches by the foreign-, defence- and prime ministers as well as press releases from the succeeding governments.

The newspapers in Norway have covered the Chechen conflict, if not to a great extent.⁸³ *The Norwegian News Agency* (NTB), which serves over 70 Norwegian newspapers, offering broad coverage of national and international affairs, has been a great source. The newspapers have been useful as a tool in finding information, on how the Norwegian MFA handled the situation officially, and how the ministry portrayed it to the Norwegian public.⁸⁴ Although these newspapers have different profiles, the media in Norway is often claimed to be part of the broad consensus orientation in Norwegian foreign policy.⁸⁵

82 Brev til Hilde K. Røstad fra det Kongelige Utenriksdepartement 22.5.2009, 08/07123-6. "Departementet finner at det ikke kan gis innsyn i overnevnte materiale, siden det ikke gis innsyn i saker som ikke er avsluttet eller på saksområder som fortsatt er aktuelle. Dokumentene i saken er i det alt vesentlige graderte og unntatt offentligheten. [The Ministry finds that it can not grant access to the above mentioned material since access is not granted to file-cases that have not been closed, or in issues that are still in train.]

⁸³ See Appendix II with tables on the media analysis of the search subject Chechnya compared to Kosovo.

⁸⁴ The Oslo based and conservative *Aftenposten* [the Evening News] is Norway's largest newspaper, and considered by many as the nation's leading newspaper. *Morgenbladet* [the Morning News] is a weekly newspaper with emphasis on culture, art, literature and politics. *Klassekampen* ['the Class Struggle'] is a daily left-wing newspaper with a largely critical perspective on the political establishment. *Nordlys* [the 'Northern Light'] is a regional paper for the northern part of Norway and its main focus is on regional issues like fish, tourism, culture, petroleum and regional development. *Bergens Tidende* [the Bergen Times] is a liberal regional newspaper in western Norway. *Vårt Land* ['Our Nation'] is published in Oslo, and is the largest newspaper with a Christian editorial outlook in Norway. The Oslo based *Dagsavisen* [the Daily News] is the former party organ of the Norwegian Labour Party, and mostly confined to the area of Oslo. *Dagbladet* [the Daily Magazine] is Norway's third largest newspaper and an Oslo based liberal profiled tabloid. *Verdens Gang* (VG) [the 'Course of the World'] is Norway largest newspaper. The Oslo based tabloid VG is often referred to as a red top newspaper.

⁸⁵ Henrik Thune, Torgeir Larsen og Gro Holm, «Budbringerens utenriksmakt? Medias innflytelse i norske utenrikspolitiske beslutningsprosesser» [the Messenger's influence on foreign policy? The media's influence on

This claim is based on two observations. First, the Norwegian press corps' profession-ethics is strict about what is regarded a legitimate source, when covering Norwegian foreign policy, compared to other domestic areas of journalism. Reportage of this sort usually occurs when a "legitimate critic", i.e. representatives of political parties, military, NGOs or specialists, denounces the government's action.⁸⁶ Second, the possibilities to run critical source-based journalistic practice are limited by the fact that final foreign political decisions and choices often take place within processes that are exempt from the public. These processes tries to unite party political opponents, public discussions on foreign policy are narrow, and the decision making occurs through a consultative organ, between the government and the Parliament.⁸⁷

Due to this strict profession-ethics where journalists usually reports only on what has been said or done by "foreign policy authorities", the Norwegian newspapers are fairly reliable sources. The newspapers will therefore mainly be used as providers of information only, and will not be regarded as a voice of its own. A methodological problem using only Norwegian papers is the disproportionate focus by the journalists on Norwegian actors compared to the overall situation. These actors would often be mentioned more briefly, or not at all, in other countries papers, which would not perceive the Norwegians as important as the Norwegians would themselves.

Interviews with former Ministers of Foreign Affairs Bjørn Tore Godal and Knut Vollebæk have been undertaken. Accordingly conversations with some of the advisors and state secretaries of respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Cecilie Landsverk, Odd Gunnar Skagestad and Kim Traavik have taken place. Apart from some recollection problems, they all shared privileged insight with me, and helped me to shed some more light on how Norway related to the wars in Chechnya.

Norwegian foreign political decision maker processes], Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann og Ole Jacob Sending (ed.), *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis: Aktører og prosesser*, Oslo 2006: 219.

⁸⁶ Thune, Larsen og Holm 2006: 219, 224.

⁸⁷ Ibid: 219, 224.

2: RUSSO-CHECHEN: SYNONYMOUS TO CONFLICT?

Before the Chechen conflict in the 1990s, there had been little Norwegian awareness of the Northern Caucasus, and little contact between Norwegians and Chechens, or North Caucasians in general. Exceptions are the author Knut Hamsun's and the Norwegian national hero Fritjof Nansen's respective travels through the North Caucasus in the early 20th century.⁸⁸ Russia and Chechnya, on the other hand, have shared close relations for over two hundred years with varying degrees of tension. The two recent wars involve a conundrum of history, nationalism, petroleum and religion. Furthermore, the wars have put human rights aside, at times strained Kremlin's relations with Western powers, and caused cold shudders to spread throughout neighbouring countries.⁸⁹

Two central questions can be posed peering into the blood-stained history of the North Caucasus and the two recent Russo-Chechen wars (1994-96 and from 1999 until time of writing). First, why was it exactly *Chechnya* that wanted national sovereignty, in light of the fact that none of the surrounding republics held the same sovereignty claim in such a zealous and inexhaustible manner? Second, *why* has Russia fought so ardently to keep this mountain nation within its borders?

Conflicts are usually complex, and to present a balanced conflict narrative is seriously challenging. A conflict account less than 18 pages worth is perhaps infeasible. Nonetheless, it gives a rough idea of a situation through the shedding of light on important factors, events, protagonists and dynamics. Several ways of presenting and explaining conflicts can, and will hopefully, always be found and the Russo-Chechen conflict is not an exception. Narratives of the Russo-Chechen conflict are often painted with broad strokes of black and white with little attention for detail. Myths created by reviewing Russo-Chechen relations through the biblical story of David and Goliath, or the story of "the lone wolf's unending struggle against the great bear", are examples of this. It makes exciting stories, but does little to promote future peace and reconciliation.⁹⁰ The myths are often based on the notion of the resistance met by the Tsar's generals in the 1800s and the classical romantic literature of Mikhail Lermontov, Alexander

⁸⁸ Knut Hamsun, *I æventyrland; Oplevet og drømt i Kaukasien*, København 1903; Fritjof Nansens *Gjennem Kaukasus til Volga*, Oslo 1929; Map over Chechnya is provided in Appendix I.

⁸⁹ I use Western as a collective term to include the countries and people of Western Europe and North America.

⁹⁰ Siv Helland, *Genres of the Wars in Chechnya: An Analysis of Story Structure and Linguistic Action in Narratives on the Russian-Chechen Conflict*, Master Thesis, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø 2006: 13; Hilde Kristin Røsstad, «Hvorfor vi glemmer Tsjetsjenia»[Why we forget Chechnya], *Dagsavisen*, 28 October 2009.

Pushkin and Leo Tolstoy presenting the “noble savage”.⁹¹ Many of these romantic elements have also been reproduced by Western journalist and academic writers on the war.⁹²

Common Russo-Chechen historic relations have often been given too much importance, and this is still often done when someone wishes to draw attention to Chechnya.⁹³ Chechen culture, traditions and especially religion, has been increasingly in focus. There has also been a tendency of personalizing the conflict, for instance spotlighting bad relations between President Yeltsin and Chechnya’s first president Dzhokhar Dudaev. What we can refer to as the Russian version has been claimed to be the most powerful voice in the main narrative upon which both political action (and to some extent public opinion) is based. This has above all been the situation within the Russian Federation. However, this has also increasingly been the situation in other countries, since the attack on the World Trade Center 11 September 2001, or one could argue since Vladimir Putin came to power.⁹⁴ The Russian government portrays its action as an important and necessary contribution to, or at least part of, the West’s “war on terror”. The Federal actions are presented as an effort to help the Chechens deal with atrocities committed by criminals within their own group.⁹⁵ What has often been neglected are the dynamics of conflict as an explanatory factor. The two recent wars should be seen in the light of the history of Russo-Chechen relations. Nevertheless, the recent conflict is also a distinct and separate affair that erupted after more than 50 years of reasonably tranquil relations.⁹⁶

CONQUEST AND RESISTANCE

When Chechnya claimed national sovereignty from Russia in 1991, the area had more or less been integrated in the Russian Empire for about 150 years. In the late 18th century Catharine the Great established Russian forces in the North Caucasus on a permanent basis. Sheikh Mansur Ushurma led his Chechen, Dagestani, Kumyk and Kabardin Mountaineers followers to victory against the Russian army. However, he later failed to unite them and after six years of fighting he was caught by Russian forces in 1791. He died in captivity.⁹⁷ In Russian history writing Sheikh Mansur’s and other North Caucasian’s resistance in those years are often referred to as revolts. However, as the North Caucasians at the time had not recognized Russian rule, resistance is

⁹¹ A selection of works: Alexander Pushkin, *Prisoner of the Caucasus* from 1820; Mikhail Lermontov, *A hero of our time* from 1839; Leo Tolstoy, *Hadji Murad* from 1911.

⁹² Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London 1997: 186-187; Hughes 2007: 6-7.

⁹³ A recent example is: Audun Trellevik, «Menn som forsvinner»[Men whom disappears], *Dagsavisen*, 27.3.2010

⁹⁴ Helland 2006: 13.

⁹⁵ Ibid: 13.

⁹⁶ Tishkov 1997: 188-189.

⁹⁷ Lieven 1998: 306

perhaps a better word. Fighting continued sporadically for half a century from Mansur's death.⁹⁸ The 1860s was the decade when the generals of Tsar Alexander II completed the conquest of the North Caucasus. The Russian regime was consolidating its power. Compared to the many European colonizers, often motivated by trading possibilities and commerce, the colonization of the North Caucasus was primarily motivated by geopolitical concerns.⁹⁹ The "small peoples" of the Caucasus had throughout the centuries constantly been invaded by others: Rome, Parthia, Iran, the Byzantines, the Arab caliphate, the Khazar kaganate, the Seljuks, the Mongol Timur, the Golden Horde, the Safavids, and the Ottomans among others.¹⁰⁰ In the 18th and 19th century, the area was scene of a struggle of control between Sunni Muslim Ottoman Turkey, Shi'i Iran and the Orthodox Christian Russia.¹⁰¹

There existed no such thing as a nation, or area, called Chechnya at the time of the conquest. Although, the Chechens *inhabited* most parts of the same area as they do today.¹⁰² However, "the Russian conquest of the Caucasus"¹⁰³ did not solely affect the Chechens, but a plurality of people such as the Ingush, Dagestanis, Abkhaz, Ossetians, Circassians and many more.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, it is often said that in comparisons with other indigenous people of the North Caucasus, the Chechens are known as the most rebellious throughout the history of the Russian empire, the Soviet Union and post-communist Russia. They have indeed had their share of trouble with various Russian/Soviet regimes and vice versa.

A continuous 30 years of resistance was lead by the legendary Dagestani religious and military leader Imam Shamil during the Russo-Caucasian War in the mid 19th century. The densely forested highland of Dagestan and Chechnya provided ideal conditions for guerrilla warfare. Shamil, nicknamed *the Lion*, surrendered in 1859 as he saw his forces exhausted and the holy struggle, *ghazawhat*, as completely devastating to the region and its people.¹⁰⁵ In 1864, the revolt called the Battle of the Daggers came about due to the arrest of the Chechen Sufi and pacifist religious leader Hajj Kunta.¹⁰⁶ The Russian-Ottoman war in 1877-78 led to new uprisings

⁹⁸ Lieven 1998: 306

⁹⁹ Consider, for instance, the role of the large European trading companies, the Hudson Bay and the Dutch or British East India companies; Michael Khordarkovsky, «Of Christianity, Enlightenment, and Colonialism: Russia in the North Caucasus, 1550-1800», *the Journal of Modern History* 1999, 2: 394-430

¹⁰⁰ Harun Ibrahimov, «Daghestan and the Near East before Islam», Moshe Gammer and David J. Wasserstein (ed.), *Daghestan and the World of Islam*, Helsinki 2006: 21.

¹⁰¹ Vladimir Bobrovnikov, «Abu Muslim in Islamic History and Mythology of the Northern Caucasus», in Moshe Gammer and David J. Wasserstein(ed.), *Daghestan and the World of Islam*, Helsinki 2006: 32.

¹⁰² Khordarkovsky 1999: 394-430.

¹⁰³ Title of the The Times journalist John Baddeley's romanticised book from 1908 about the people, culture and history of the Caucasus; John Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, London 1908.

¹⁰⁴ Walter Richmond, *the Northwest Caucasus: Past, Present, Future*, London 2008: 115-119.

¹⁰⁵ Lieven 1998: 308-309.

¹⁰⁶ Lieven 1998: 316.

in Chechnya and Dagestan. Revolution throughout Russia led to further revolt in Chechnya in 1905. Through the years 1917-21, with the Bolshevik seizure of power, there was a final Checheno-Dagestanian struggle for allegiance to Islam and independence from the Russian regime.¹⁰⁷

In 1921 the Chechens, Ingush, Ossetes, Karachai, and Balks were united in the Soviet Mountain Republic. Yet, only three years later, they were organized into separate autonomous regions, and raised to the status of Autonomous Republics. Disturbances again broke out between 1929 and 1935, which led to many Chechens being executed as a reprisal in 1937. The Chechen nationalist Hassan Isvailov led an uprising against Russia in 1940, and his group allegedly joined the German front in June 1941.¹⁰⁸

THE DEPORTATION

On Stalin's order 478 479 ethnic Chechens and Ingush were deported on 22 February 1944, charged as Nazi-collaborators *en masse*.¹⁰⁹ It did not only affect Chechens and Ingush. Kalmyks, Karachai, Balkars and Crimean Tatars were also deported by Stalin's regime.¹¹⁰ The deported peoples were unloaded onto the steppes of Kazakhstan and other settlements throughout Central Asia, where it is estimated that one quarter of the deportees died.¹¹¹ These figures include the fact that in half a dozen Chechen villages the Russian deportation troops were unable to move the inhabitants. Instead of being deported, the villagers were massacred in barns and mosques by Russian troops.¹¹²

The deported nationalities were eliminated from all Soviet official documents and the great Soviet encyclopaedia as if they had never existed.¹¹³ During Nikita Khrushchev's period, 1953-64, the Chechens and Ingush were allowed to return to their homeland. Although Khrushchev never withdrew the Nazi-collaborator charges, the Premier initiated investigations into the massacres committed during the deportations, and went for a fresh start by denouncing

¹⁰⁷ Lieven, 1998: 317.

¹⁰⁸ Lieven, 1998: 317; Alexandr M. Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of Second World War*, New York 1978: 53.

¹⁰⁹ Lieven, 1998: 319.

¹¹⁰ Nekrich 1978

¹¹¹ Dzhabrail Gakaev, «Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005: 49; Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, London 1998: 71; Richmond 2008: 117.

¹¹² Valentin Mikhailov, «Chechnya and Tatarstan: Differences in search of an explanation», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, 2005: 49; Lieven 1998: 319.

¹¹³ Lieven 1998: 319.

the deportations as crimes of the Stalin-era. The autonomous republics were re-established.¹¹⁴ The Chechens as a people has suffered hardships, and their shared North Caucasian history with the Russians has, as shown, at times been outright gruesome. However these events in themselves cannot provide the main explanatory cause of a war taking place 60 years later. Nonetheless, it is well known that misuse of history can provide belligerent leaders with narratives they can use in their agitating rhetoric, as was done, deliberately or not, by the Dudaev regime in the 1990s.¹¹⁵ The Russo-Chechen shared history is not all battles and blood.

INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL UNREST

From the Khrushchev-period, and up until 1991, is seen by many as a peaceful period with cultural and economic prosperity.¹¹⁶ Still, instances of social unrest occurred from time to time. There were tensions between ethnic Chechens and Russians in the Chechen-Ingush Republic. Ethnic Chechens and Russians lived in fairly distinctly separated areas within the republic. Whereas Russians mostly populated the urban areas, ethnic Chechens dominated the countryside. Intermarriage seldom took place between ethnic Chechens and Russians, as they did in some other autonomous republics with mixed populations.¹¹⁷ Also, 90 percent of the ethnic Chechens, although fluent in Russian, placed the Chechen language above Russian in terms of daily use. In other ethnic republics within the Russian Federation, Russian was usually dominant as practiced language, also within the non-Russian populations.¹¹⁸

By the end of the 1980s the Chechen Ingush Republic lagged behind the rest of the Russian republics in most aspects of socio-economic development.¹¹⁹ Half the population was under 30 years of age, and unemployment among ethnic Chechens reached 30 per cent. Not surprisingly, there was a growing discontent among ethnic Chechens in the republic. Chechnya was the only ethnic republic that did not have a person from their own ethnic group in a leadership position. An increasing nationalist tendency, which focused on their indigenous culture as separate from the Soviet/Russian, gradually got a firmer foothold. A demand for more autonomy became apparent. This was conceded by the Soviet regime to ease the fervour in the republic, but perhaps the initiative came too late. Nonetheless, in June 1989 Doku Zavgaev

¹¹⁴ Gail Lapidus, «Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya», *International Security* 1998, 1: 9; Richmond 2008: 120.

¹¹⁵ Yahia Said, «Greed and Grievance in Chechnya», in Mary Kaldor, Terry Lynn Karl and Yahia Said (ed.), *Oil Wars*, London 2007: 134; Tishkov 2007: 188-189.

¹¹⁶ Richard Sakwa, «Introduction: Why Chechnya?», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005: 6.

¹¹⁷ Mikhailov 2005: 51.

¹¹⁸ Ibid: 51.

¹¹⁹ Sakwa 2005: 1-2.

became the first Chechen to lead the republic as head of the Chechen Communist Party Organization.¹²⁰

DISSOLUTION

In Boris Yeltsin's struggle to undermine the authority of Premier Mikhail Gorbachev and gain support in the upcoming election throughout Russia, he supported secessionist groups in republics within Russia. He let slip the now famous phrase: "Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow."¹²¹ Many people took this literally, causing great enthusiasm and support, also within the Chechen republic.

The disintegration of the USSR was accelerated by a failed coup in August 1989 launched by a group of conservative communists against Premier Gorbachev. It was uncertain to people in both the union republics and the autonomous republics to what leader they owed their loyalty. Was it to the conservative coup initiators; the reformist Gorbachev; or the new Russian leadership in pursuit of democracy headed by Boris Yeltsin? There were different conceptions as well on whether the union should disintegrate altogether or be redesigned in a new way.¹²²

The USSR's collapse was a period of deep and general crisis for Russia. The state institutions were altered; the national economy suffered from the collapse of the Gorbachev economy and the loss of the Eastern European markets; and the population's savings were wiped out by hyperinflation. The Russian national identity also went through a crisis due to questions of the "what constitutes Russia now", "who are Russian" sort. The great Red Army was deprived of its highest authority, its purpose and ideology. Soldiers had to go for months without wages and new equipment, and it was a despairing situation for many men in Soviet uniform. This situation would also lead way to massive plundering and corruption during the Russo-Chechen wars.¹²³

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION

The crisis in the USSR and Russia presented an opportunity for the political mobilization of a national identity in Chechnya that aspired to independence. In November 1990 a congress aiming to celebrate Chechen culture was held in Grozny.¹²⁴ The congress consisted mostly of clan-elders and excluded much of the urban population. The urban population was Russian-Chechen-dominated, less inclined to traditional observation of Islam and Chechen custom and overall

¹²⁰ Sakwa 2005: 3.

¹²¹ Lieven 1998: 61.

¹²² Gall and Waal 1998: 89.

¹²³ Said 2007: 135.

¹²⁴ Gall and Waal 1998: 76.

more Sovietised.¹²⁵ This difference has also been obvious in the recent conflicts, where the most zealous resistance towards Russia has come from the southern Chechen highland.

The congress initiative was supported from different groups with diverging agendas. Doku Zavgaev, the first ethnic Chechen to be head of the Chechen Communist Party Organisation, contributed to the making of the congress in an attempt to consolidate his newly achieved power in the republic. He wanted to smoothen over the uneasy situation between the diverging alliances in the Chechen society. Yeltsin supported the congress with the aim of putting pressure on the local Soviet authorities, i.e. Doku Zavgaev, to speed up political change on a larger scale.¹²⁶

Dzhokhar Dudaev, the first ethnic Chechen to achieve the title of Air force General in the Soviet Army was elected Chairman of the Congress. He had already taken part in the Estonian revolution; by refusing to obey Gorbachev's orders to deploy Soviet Special Forces into Estonia by closing off the airspace.¹²⁷ This choice of Chairman turned out to be unfortunate for Doku Zavgaev, because Dudaev had in stark terms criticized Zavgaev for not having strongly enough condemned the Communist coup attempt in August. The communist elite, with Zavgaev as head, including moderate intellectuals, were fairly rapidly swept away by brutal revolutionary political events unfolding under the leadership of Dudaev.¹²⁸ Dudaev had able men under his command, who were preparing for war and who knew the Soviet/Russian army from the inside: Aslan Maskhadov and Shamil Basaev, described below, became the main protagonists on the Chechen side after Dudaev was killed by a laser guided missile while using a satellite phone.¹²⁹

Former Colonel in the Soviet Artillery Aslan Maskhadov was later to become the first and only elected President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. He was by many seen as the most moderate of the Chechen separatist leaders. He was however not able to gather the factions of the post-war Chechnya between 1997 and 1999. Although he is often spoken of in positive terms, he gained no international support as President and had to fight against both internal and external forces.¹³⁰ Maskhadov was killed by Russian forces 8 March 2005.¹³¹

Shamil Basaev who would become Chechnya's legendary commander, and the Kremlin's proclaimed "enemy nr.1" until he was killed in a car explosion July 2006.¹³² At the start of the Chechen conflict he had already obtained a reputation as a terrorist when he hijacked a Russian

¹²⁵ Sakwa 2005: 3.

¹²⁶ Ibid: 3.

¹²⁷ Hughes 2007: 23.

¹²⁸ Sakwa 2005: 3-4.

¹²⁹ James Hughes 2007: 87.

¹³⁰ Ibid: 95-97.

¹³¹ Sakwa 2005: 14.

¹³² James Hughes 2007: 107.

airplane in 1991. Basaev had been trained by Soviet forces, and he had fought against the Georgians on the Abkhazian/Russian side. Basaev would become Chechnya's legendary and charismatic field commander, but also notorious for the terrorist operations in Budennovsk and Beslan.¹³³

Dudaev was elected President in Chechnya on 27 October 1991 where he gained 85 percent of the votes. The dodgy state of the election proceedings brought about loud protests. Dudaev gave himself emergency powers, officially for a month only, but he never surrendered them.¹³⁴ In November 1992 the Ingush proclaimed their own republic, separate from the Chechens and firmly placed within the Federal Republic of Russia. The democratic reforms many were hoping for in Chechnya faltered at an early stage.¹³⁵ The Chechen civilian society suffered in the years *before* the first war erupted. The nascent regime of Chechnya was upheld by a shadow economy and had large internal problems to deal with. Money laundering, human trafficking with open slave-markets, drug trade, and illegal weapon transactions were all main components of this economy. During the Yeltsin period law enforcement was too underfunded and poorly trained to protect businesses and enforce binding contracts on most levels. It therefore became necessary for many people to join a protection racket usually controlled by local mafia. The Chechen mafia, notorious for its brutality, clan loyalty and safe havens in the Chechen highland, controlled the Russian criminal underworld.¹³⁶ Mafia enterprise became a bearing structure in Chechen society, seemingly accepted by the Grozny regime under Dudaev. Kidnappings turned into a profitable and common activity, and train robberies an almost weekly affair.¹³⁷ It was not a new phenomenon, but the criminal problems emanating from the Chechen republic in the period leading up to the first war presented a massive problem to the Russian government.¹³⁸

On 2 November 1991 Dudaev and his government claimed full independence from Russia. Yeltsin responded to the increasingly lawless circumstances by declaring a state of emergency in Chechnya in November 1991, and threatened to use military force. The threat was real enough, but the Russian troops that performed the half-hearted intervention were quickly surrounded by Dudaev's national forces. The operation was called off by the Russian parliament, and Yeltsin's operation turned into an unpopular blunder.¹³⁹ His military forces were put on buses

¹³³ James Hughes 2007: 153.

¹³⁴ Lieven 1998: 63.

¹³⁵ Tishkov 1997: 209.

¹³⁶ Said 2007: 137.

¹³⁷ Gakaev 2005: 32-33.

¹³⁸ Said 2007: 137-138.

¹³⁹ Pål Kolstø, *Political Construction Sites: Nation-Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*, Oxford 2000: 215.

and driven out of Chechnya.¹⁴⁰ The Kremlin supported, however, from that point on pro-Russian forces in the Caucasus. It developed into a “half-force variant” where Russian authorities sustained the Chechen opposition’s against President Dudaev in August-November 1994.¹⁴¹

MASTERS OF WAR

In December 1994 Russia invaded Chechnya, and two years of brutal war followed. However, it was not only Chechnya that was on the brink of armed conflict in the Russian federation. Some political commentators at the time believed that several other republics, such as Tatarstan, were more likely to erupt into war than Chechnya.¹⁴² Contrary to Chechnya, President Yeltsin managed to sort out a functional agreement with Tatarstan. But why did he not manage the same with Chechnya? Why did Russia invade Chechnya and why at this point? The answers provided are as many as the works providing them. However, “the origins of the Russian invasion of Chechnya in late 1994 are complicated and still somewhat mysterious, despite the availability of memoir accounts, interviews, and some documents.”¹⁴³

As shown above, the historic relations cannot account for the turn of event alone. Neither can Dudaev’s revolution as it went on for three years before the invasion. However, the increasingly generally criminal situation in Chechnya and a series of bus-hijackings in the summer of 1994 is often seen as either triggers or pretexts of the first war. These hijackings has been connected to what has been described as a social tradition of *banditry* for younger Chechen males has functioned as a form of national resistance towards Russia. This type of action, which included robbery and kidnapping, contributed to trigger the intervention in Chechnya in 1994, and has been used by Russian authorities as an excuse to impose military control on the “uncivilized” and “banditry” people.¹⁴⁴ Such an argument, however, can be considered tainted by the tendency of reading myths about the Chechen people into the situation of the nineties.

Russian decision makers of this mindset thought they would be met as liberators by the people in Chechnya from what was often referred to as a “bandit-regime”. This misfired most likely because it triggered the Chechen people’s collective memory of ardent struggle against Russian invaders for centuries.¹⁴⁵ Opposed to perceiving the Russian military as liberators, the Chechen people, even the moderates who approved of being a republic within the Russian federal

¹⁴⁰ Hughes 2007: 27.

¹⁴¹ Charlotte Wagnsson, *Russian Political Language and Public opinion on the West, NATO and Chechnya*, Stockholm 2000: 144.

¹⁴² Mikhailov 2005: 25; Kolstø 2000: 217.

¹⁴³ Matthew Evangelista, *Chechnya: Will Russia go the way of the Soviet Union*, Washington D. C. 2002: 11.

¹⁴⁴ Lieven 1998: 87; Hughes 2007: 109.

¹⁴⁵ Evangelista 2002: 3.

system, united against the Russian invasion.¹⁴⁶ It is in addition by many emphasized that Yeltsin's popularity had for a while been low and the ratings seriously wavering by 1994. In this respect, some of his advisors thought he could benefit from a "small victorious war".¹⁴⁷

In the period leading up to the first war, Dudaev made several attempts to meet with Yeltsin. Dudaev's repeated foulmouthed comments about Yeltsin did not help him set up such a meeting. Yeltsin's closest advisors repeatedly advised Yeltsin not to meet with Dudaev.¹⁴⁸ However, Chechnya had, in addition, a couple of other assets that were important to the Kremlin, perhaps most importantly the geostrategic situation.

GEOGRAPHY AND PETROLEUM

Natural resources and the geopolitical position of Chechnya contributed to the wars in several ways. A strategic argument was that Yeltsin and his government wanted to set an example against a domino-effect on aspiring secessionist republics, fearing that the drive for independence would pick up elsewhere in Russia and lead to an eventual destruction of Russian territorial integrity.¹⁴⁹ Eastern Caucasus lay on the edge of Russia's two main lines of communication to the Transcaucasia: the capital coastal road via Derbent to Baku and the Georgian military highway from Vladikavkaz to Tbilisi. It would be a considerable obstruction to the Russians to have a labile sovereign Chechnya in the midst of the area.

During the Soviet era Chechnya's oil production constituted 21.5 million tonnes per year. In 1991 it was down to 6 million tonnes.¹⁵⁰ Today, official output stands at less than 2 million tonnes per year. Illegal extraction is estimated to be between 100,000 and 2 million tonnes per year. Grozny had the largest refinery in the USSR, but it was unsuitable for Chechen oil, which was therefore shipped to a special refinery in Tuapse on the Russian Black Sea coast. During the bombing of Grozny the Petro-Chemical facilities were severely damaged.¹⁵¹

Illicit siphoning and refining of Chechen oil was an economy of its own. The profit was split between the Russian military and the Chechen warlords and was perhaps the most obvious petroleum related prolonger of the conflict. There are a couple of more indirect ways to add to the picture: First, Russia became more dependent on oil revenues during the Yeltsin period, which saw a decline in state economy and a weaker state structure. Second, the USA, and other Western government's increasing interest for Caspian oil, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline

¹⁴⁶ Lieven, 1998: 87; Hughes 2007: 109.

¹⁴⁷ Lieven 1998: 87; Hughes 2007: 109.

¹⁴⁸ Gakaev: 23; Tishkov 1997: 187-188.

¹⁴⁹ Evangelista 2002: 3.

¹⁵⁰ Said 2007: 131.

¹⁵¹ Ibid: 131.

that completely evades Russian territory, was perceived by parts of the Russian military and political establishment as direct challenges to Russia's interests in the region.¹⁵²

A large oil consortium in Azerbaijan, with British Petroleum and Norwegian Statoil as leaders, wanted, along with Russia, to lead the oil in the already existing pipelines through Chechnya. This demanded stability. Precisely because of the instability, alternative pipeline-routes were explored, both through Georgia and Turkey.¹⁵³ The violence in Chechnya in the 1990s affected Dagestan and should be seen in connection with trans-national petroleum companies' rivalry for the oil of the Caspian basin.¹⁵⁴ This can have made it more difficult for the Kremlin to accept international involvement in the resolution of the conflict.¹⁵⁵

So, not only was it important to keep the Federal State of Russia from disintegrating even more, but it was also a question of natural resources. Nonetheless, even though these matters have been of key concern to the Kremlin, it has not been proclaimed as the Kremlin's basis for invading the small mountain republic twice. The second war was launched in 1999 by Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin after a period of two years of Chechen independence. As will be shown in chapter 4 and 5, it was a period with little social, political and economic prosperity and with almost total political isolation. Putin gradually turned the wars in Chechnya into campaigns against terrorism linked to Islamism.¹⁵⁶

FAITH

Religion has been seen as an increasing part of the conflict, but it has been difficult to define its role, which moreover has changed with the dynamics of the conflict. There is no consensus among scholars or parties involved in the conflict as to what extent religion promoted conflict with the Russians. The Chechens are Muslims, as are most people of the Northern Caucasus. There are distinct cultural differences from the orthodox Christianity and the Soviet atheism in Russia, without claiming, in Huntington manner, that this difference has been a natural cause for conflict.¹⁵⁷ The Islamization of the Caucasus has gone through different stages, in the course of over 1000 years and diverging versions of Islam were imposed depending on the respective

¹⁵² Said 2007: 136-137.

¹⁵³ «Sjevardnadse drøfter oljepolitikk i London» [Shevardnadze discusses oil politics in London], *NTB*, 15.2.1995; Anatol Lieven, 1998: 312; Unfortunately, discussions on the part that energy and petroleum have played, both as triggers for the two wars themselves, but also as to how Norway and other Western government's have related to the situation in Chechnya, goes beyond the capacity of this thesis' time schedule and page-limit.

¹⁵⁴ Mikhailov 2005: 25.

¹⁵⁵ Said 2007: 131.

¹⁵⁶ Emil Pain, «The Chechen War in the Context of Contemporary Russian Politics», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, 2005: 25.

¹⁵⁷ Mikhailov 2005: 47.

rulers.¹⁵⁸ The Chechens usually follow one of the two *Sufi* orders *Quadiriya* or *Naqshbandiya*.¹⁵⁹ *Sufism* is a mystical oriented version of Islam, where the goal for the worshiper, in addition to leading a correct Islamic life, is to reach a spiritual connection with the Deity, “to become one with God”.¹⁶⁰ The Sufi tradition has been present in the Northern Caucasus through the centuries, but it was mainly in the early 19th century that the Sufi orders established their dominance.¹⁶¹ *Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiyya-Khalidiyya* was introduced first and was after thirty years largely supplanted by the *Quadiriya*.¹⁶²

The person introducing the *Quadiriya* brotherhood was al-shaykh al-Hajj Kunta al-Michiki al Iliskhani. He preached to end the armed struggle, and the war exhausted Chechens gathered around his authority. His popularity aroused Russian suspicion, and he was arrested and died after five years in Russian captivity.¹⁶³ The *Quadiriya* movement, which had started out opposing armed resistance to Russia, “turned into its sworn enemy”.¹⁶⁴ Later, branches of the *Quadiriya* took part in all, and lead many, uprisings against Russian rule – tsarist, Soviet and post-Soviet alike.¹⁶⁵ In the Soviet Union, the Chechens were not allowed to practise their religion, and even after the reconstitution of the Chechen-Ingush Republic in 1957, they were still not allowed to build mosques.¹⁶⁶ It is hard to estimate the extent and the significance of Islam, in particular Sufism, in Chechnya by the time of the Soviet collapse. Religious practice was severely controlled by Soviet authorities and Sufi orders were suppressed. The Sufi-orders themselves, however, are secret and allow the followers pragmatic deception to avoid detection, and are therefore hard to control.¹⁶⁷

It has been asserted by many conflict experts and politicians that the conservative Islamic branch of *Wahabism* took firm hold of certain groups in Chechnya in the early nineties.¹⁶⁸ It has further been assumed that this lead to a radicalisation of the Chechen insurgents and intensified the use of terrorism as a political weapon. Wahabism is an ultra-conservative Sunni-Muslim

¹⁵⁸ Moshe Gammer, «The Introduction of the Khalidiya and the Qadiriyya into Daghestan in the Nineteenth Century», in Moshe Gammer and David Wasserstein (ed.), *Daghestan and the World of Islam*, Helsinki 2006: 55.

¹⁵⁹ Gall and Waal 1998: 25.

¹⁶⁰ Knut S. Vikør, *Islam: Ei faktabok*, Oslo 2002: 108.

¹⁶¹ Bobrovnikov 2006: 28.

¹⁶² Gammer 2006: 55.

¹⁶³ Ibid: 60.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid: 60.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid: 60.

¹⁶⁶ Sakwa 2005: 7.

¹⁶⁷ James Hughes, 2007:12.

¹⁶⁸ I will consequently use the term Wahabism, as the scholars of the secondary literature I use in this chapter. A theoretic discussion on Salafism and Wahabism is too time and space consuming for this thesis. For a light version of the differences see: Vikør 2002: 45-49.

tradition established by 18th century Arab reformer Muhammed Ibn Abd Al-Wahab.¹⁶⁹ The Saudi kings, consolidating their power, supported him and it is still state religion in Saudi Arabia today.¹⁷⁰ Today, the term “wahabi” often refers to a group of only loosely related movements, “many of which do not espouse violent action.”¹⁷¹

RELIGION AND TERRORISM

Horrifying images from the Childrens School in Beslan and earlier terrorist attacks made it more legitimate for the Kremlin to internationalize its idiom of the conflict as one that matched Western concerns about Islamic terrorism.¹⁷² Shamil Basaev was supposedly one of the senior leaders who took an increasing interest in a Wahhabist-direction. He left Chechnya several months in 1994 for the military training camp, *Khost* (al-Qaida’s main base), in Afghanistan with some thirty of his soldiers.¹⁷³ It is assumed that Basaev there became part of the Wahabi jihad.¹⁷⁴ The notion that Basaev himself was a Wahabist is nonetheless disputed. Basaev came from the traditionalist Chechen highlands where Sufi Islam and Chechen customs, *Adat*, were observed. Shamil Basaev was allegedly himself named after the legendary Imam Shamil the Lion, and his birth town Veden, in the Chechen highland, was permeated by political and religious traditions.¹⁷⁵ The association between the Chechen radicals under Basaev and al-Qaida were highlighted, and Putin was forceful in presenting the Russian position in international affairs.¹⁷⁶

Basaev second in command in Chechnya was the Saudi Arabian with the *nom de guerre* al-Khattab. In early 1995, when al-Khattab joined the Chechen resistance movement, he was one of Bin Laden’s senior commanders. Through these connections the Chechen insurgents were provided with money and military resources.¹⁷⁷ The insistence, however, that there were many Arab fighters in Chechnya has been proven false. There were some, among them al-Khattab’s small group of fighters called the “Islamic International Brigade”, but not more than a few dozens all in all.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁹ Richmond 2008: 160.

¹⁷⁰ Vikør 2002: 47-48.

¹⁷¹ Richmond 2008: 160.

¹⁷² James Hughes, «The Peace process in Chechnya», in Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005: 285.

¹⁷³ Hughes 2007: 101.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid: 101.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid: 100.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid: 135.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid: 102.

¹⁷⁸ Lieven 1998: 84; Hughes 2007: 102.

Although using Wahabism as an ideological justification for acts of terrorism, “individuals such as Basaev would more accurately be described as militants or separatists.”¹⁷⁹ Close associates of the Chechen military commander such as Maskhadov, however, argue against Wahabi-influence on the Chechen fighters.¹⁸⁰ They argued that Basaev was too traditionalist to be personally engaged with Wahabism. Political scientist Julie Wilhelmsen does not agree with Russian authorities’ version that Basaev and his followers or other Chechen insurgents were Wahabi or religious fundamentalists. They fought for sovereignty from Russia. She did, however, find that Chechen insurgents at times were intentionally associated with al-Qaida for pragmatic reasons i.e. economical funding and military training from sympathizers in the Middle East.¹⁸¹

When Maskhadov on 4 January 1999 decreed that the religious *Shari‘a* laws should rule Chechen society, it caused outrage in the Kremlin and public opinion across the Russian Federation.¹⁸² The tradition of *Shari‘a*, however, is not foreign to Chechnya, although it has to a large degree been adapted to the reigning customs, *adat*. Maskhadov’s decree was by some regarded as evidence that Maskhadov was not a moderate, and that he supported Basaev more than he officially claimed to do.¹⁸³ However, Maskhadov’s reason for introducing *Shari‘a* can have had many pragmatic causes. The Chechen President was unable to establish control over a post war society in anarchic conditions. He received no support from the Kremlin or international organisations. He needed to consolidate his power by trying to please more extremist tendencies such as Basaev’s radical Islamic rhetoric. As such, it was perhaps a desperate strategy.¹⁸⁴ Maskhadov was torn between choosing civil war or concessions to extremist groups.¹⁸⁵

Several factors provide a backdrop to the religious fervour gripping Chechnya in the nineties. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Muslim peoples of the Northern Caucasus were once again allowed to practice their faith, which had been suppressed by Soviet authorities. In the wake of the massive Russian reforms, a breakdown of the economy combined with faltering local and federal authorities, an increase in criminal activity and corruption in Chechnya was obvious. Islam’s message of equality and social justice, because of this, became very

¹⁷⁹ Richmond 2008: 161.

¹⁸⁰ Hughes 2007: 158.

¹⁸¹ Julie Wilhelmsen, *When Separatists become Islamists: The Case of Chechnya*, FFI report – 2004/00445, 2004: 67.

¹⁸² Hughes 2007: 104.

¹⁸³ Robert Bruce Ware, «A multitude of Evils: Mythology and Political Failure in Chechnya», in Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London 2005: 98.

¹⁸⁴ Mike Bowker, «Western views of the Chechen conflict», in Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London 2005: 98.

¹⁸⁵ Hughes 2007: 104.

appealing to a people who had lost their faith in the secular authorities.¹⁸⁶ The brutalities and losses of war came in addition. Turning to religion in trying times is a well-known phenomenon. As a final point, similar to former days of Chechen resistance movements, Islam can once again have become somewhat synonymous with resistance in the small republic.

The Dudaev-regime that led Chechnya into the first war with Russia, is considered most considered to have had little to do with Islamism. They did perform some traditional ceremonies in public, but these seem more of a façade than a real commitment, but it did bring support in the traditionalist areas.¹⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the Kremlin said they were fighting bandits and terrorists. Individual Chechen insurgents did carry out terrorist operations. James Hughes suggests that “a balanced assessment of the use of terrorism by Chechens demonstrates that it has been used sporadically rather than systematically, and in reaction to Russian intervention.” He further claims that both terrorism and Islamization in Chechnya is a product of the conflict, and had in turn had significant impact on how the conflict developed and was perceived.¹⁸⁸

“The conflict in Chechnya is still a separatist conflict – not a religious war, not a war against international terrorist networks.” The quote is taken from Julie Wilhelmsen conclusion in her dissertation on the relation between Chechen insurgents and Islam from 2004.¹⁸⁹ Wilhelmsen thought that if the Kremlin pursued the same brutal tactics in the years to come, they would be responsible for a development in a more fundamental religious direction in Chechnya.¹⁹⁰ Her assertion was supported by descriptions of how the Federal counter-insurgency operations have accelerated “the recruitment of individuals into the ranks of militant groups professing Islamic principles.”¹⁹¹ It can seem as if the Kremlin gradually through the application of rough methods has *created* the terror problem it all the way has claimed to be combating.

For instance, many Chechen youth, especially boys, are at risk of being put into so-called filtration camps, suspected of insurgent activity on the grounds of being of the right age. These detention centres are often synonymous with torture, disappearances and death. Therefore, many young Chechens choose to join Islamic bannered groups that still fight against federal forces. Support from other Islamist political groups in the Middle East, or Africa, can additionally have encouraged stricter religious practise. A lot of moral support might also be secured for Chechen insurgents by being part of a global jihad, not only economical benefits. Global movements

¹⁸⁶ Richmond 2008: 160.

¹⁸⁷ Hughes 2007: 67.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid: 204.

¹⁸⁹ Wilhelmsen 2004: 67.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid: 68.

¹⁹¹ Richmond 2008: 162.

strengthened by the use of the World Wide Web should not be underestimated in matters like these.¹⁹²

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CASE OF CHECHNYA

The wars played out in Chechnya challenged a whole spectrum of human rights obligations that Russia had recognized and committed itself to. Among the most fundamental human rights is the right to life and freedom from torture and ill-treatment. These are central in international humanitarian law, in “political binding” documents within the OSCE framework, and in many global and regional conventions and declarations, including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).¹⁹³ Nonetheless, these are the rights Russian authorities most often have been criticized for violating. “In both wars, as in all developments in Chechnya over the last ten years, the trend has been from ‘bad to worse’.”¹⁹⁴

The extensive human rights violations in Chechnya have been thoroughly documented by NGO’s such as Amnesty International, Memorial, Doctors without Borders, Human Rights Watch, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and others. The documentation has only increased in volumes. Despite this, the conflict has been neglected and experienced double standards compared to other conflicts such as the human rights situation in Kosovo. After 11 years with more or less constant armed conflict and violence, the Norwegian Refugee Council stated in 2005 that “Chechnya constitutes the most serious human rights crisis in Europe today.” Based on documentation from humanitarian organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Memorial, it was stated that the civilian population has suffered “grave and massive human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, disappearances and torture, including rape.”¹⁹⁵ The 1998 Russian law gave legal “protection” (immunity) to state officials, military and security personnel engaged in counterterrorism.¹⁹⁶ The Russo-Chechen conflict’s brutality has not been confined within the borders of Chechnya.

External journalists, lawyers and human rights activists that have been engaged with the conflict, have to an extensive degree had their lives threatened, and in many cases been murdered. The Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya was perhaps the most well known of these activists. In October 2006 she was gunned down on her way home, after preparing extensive

¹⁹² Tishkov 1997: 188.

¹⁹³ Julie Wilhelmsen, «Grove menneskerettighetsbrudd i Tsjetsjenia- en snublestein for Europarådet», *Nordisk Østforum* 2005, 2: 151.

¹⁹⁴ Alexander Cherkasov and Dmitry Grushkin, «The Chechen Wars and Human Rights in Russia», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005: 132.

¹⁹⁵ Austbø (ed.) 2005: 6.

¹⁹⁶ Hughes 2007: 140; Cherkasov and Grushkin 2005: 141-143.

documentation on the widespread and systematic use of torture by Russian forces and their proxies in Chechnya. Another menace to Russian society is the increase of Russian soldiers that return from warfare in Chechnya with damaged nerves, criminal minds, as drug-addicts or with alcohol problems, not able to function in every-day life. In Chechnya the infrastructure was severely ruined, the school system nonexistent and a whole new generation knows little beside war.¹⁹⁷

THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT

Even with the above conflict elements in mind it is hard to tell why such a human tragedy came to unfold. An important premise for understanding a conflict is to take into account the dynamics of conflict. In accordance with this conflict-dynamics perspective it is not necessarily correct to talk about the reasons for *a* conflict, because the conflict may just as well consist of several conflicts intertwined. A conflict also goes through different phases with alterations of key issues and changing protagonists.¹⁹⁸

The dynamics of the conflict is thus an explanatory point of view that helps understanding the Russo-Chechen Conflict. To focus simply on Russo-Chechen history, geopolitics, protagonists, or terrorism is just not adequate. All of the above-mentioned explanatory factors have to be seen as interactive factors that have triggered or facilitated armed action. The Chechen conflict started off as a secessionist nationalist conflict within the Russian Federation ignited by the wave of the nationalist movements in the nineties. It soon developed into an armed standstill with guerrilla warfare and acts of terrorism as spotlighted ingredients. By the second half of the 1990s the conflict was somewhat transformed “into a struggle driven largely by ideas based on religious and racial exclusivism.”¹⁹⁹ The study of the transition of the Chechen insurgents from nationalists to jihad warriors is a good example of the dynamics of the Russo-Chechen war. The conflict has been so-called *Chechenized* because the Russian authorities have to a gradually degree fought through Chechen proxies. The violence has increasingly been carried out by Chechens against Chechens.²⁰⁰

The best way to answer the two initial questions, “of all the Russian republics – why Chechnya?” and “why has Russia gone through two wars to keep this republic?” is by starting with a different question: Why did the first war take place? Several explanations and alternative explanations can, as shown, be found. Nonetheless, as soon as the first war had started the

¹⁹⁷ Austbø (ed.) 2005.

¹⁹⁸ Hughes, 2007: x.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid: xi.

²⁰⁰ Ibid: 118-119.

conflict changed. Many of the protagonists radicalized and so on. The situation was severely changed after two years of war and Chechnya lay in ruins. Russian families had lost thousands of sons as soldiers in Chechnya, the Chechen society was thoroughly brutalized and acts of terrorism were escalating outside Chechen borders. The state of Chechnya and the causes of the second Russian war are therefore probably to be found in the fact that the first war was launched, and that no one took responsibility to get Chechnya back on its feet after the first war. The causes of the conflict today are results of the first and especially the second war and the brutality that was exercised, rather than the “bad historic relations from the days of the Tsar” or the geopolitical Russian interests for that sake. Therefore, the answer to the second question may invalidate the first question. If Russia had not invaded Chechnya in 1994, Chechnya might not have been *the* republic maintaining the claim to sovereignty in such inexhaustible manner. Perhaps that was a consequence of the war.

Today the “peace” in Chechnya is ruptured with violence, insecurity and unemployment. Armed action between insurgents and Federal Forces are still taking place every week and spreading to neighbouring republics such as Dagestan and Ingushetia. Militant and Islamic movements across the borders of the North Caucasian Republics are spreading violence, destruction and terror, also in the capital Moscow. It seems Yeltsin was right in his predictions of war in Chechnya in 1994:

Intervention by force is impermissible and must not be done. Were we to apply pressure by force to Chechnya, this would rouse the whole Caucasus, there would be such a commotion, there would be so much blood that nobody would ever forgive us.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Lieven 1998: 88.

3: NORWEGIAN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S INVASION OF CHECHNYA

Russia's military offensive against the Chechen insurgents in December 1994 did not pass unnoticed in Norway. Fighting in North Caucasus was reported in Norwegian newspapers as early as November 1994.²⁰² Further, on 13 December several Norwegian newspapers stated that Russian military forces had clashed with Chechen insurgents on numerous occasions.²⁰³ One must assume that the Norwegian Embassy in Moscow had kept the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA, well informed on the situation, so that the news did not come unexpectedly to the ministry.

Tidings of a war stirring in the North Caucasus had been generally talked about in the Norwegian media since 1992, and it is hard to imagine that it had not been discussed in diplomatic corridors.²⁰⁴ At this time, however, the Kremlin had launched conventional war on its own citizens in a part of their own state. Norway's Labour Party Government, along with other Western governments, had to respond in some way to an increasingly violent situation.

This chapter concerns how the Norwegian government responded and related to the eruption of the first Chechen war in December 1994 and throughout 1995. This chapter seeks to observe what dominated the Norwegian official response and approach. It is also an effort to see what means, i.e. political, economical or diplomatic, Norway had to affect the situation.

NORWEGIAN RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION

On the morning of 11 December 1994, around 40 000 Russian troops were ordered over the Chechen border. For all involved, the situation was rather gloomy from the outset. The Russian army was not well prepared for the neatly organised resistance arranged by Chechen officers, of whom many had their military ranks from the Soviet Army. The Russian's equipment for intercommunication was poor, and their food supplies ran out at an early stage. The moral of the many young untrained Russian soldiers was reported by present journalists

²⁰² «Russland og Tsjetsjenia på grensen til krig» [Russia and Chechnya at the brink of war], *NTB*, 29.11.1994.

²⁰³ «Russere og Tsjetsjenere i åpen kamp» [Russians and Chechens in open fight], *Aftenposten*, 13.12.1994; «Nye kamper i Tsjetsjenia» [New fighting in Chechnya], *NTB*, 13.12.1994; «Drept av raketter» [Killed by rockets], *VG*, 13.12.1994.

²⁰⁴ «Kaukasus i etnisk brann» [Caucasus ethnically aflame], *Aftenposten*, 2.10.1992; «Et utall etniske konflikter raser i det gamle SSSR» [innumerable ethnical conflicts rage in the old USSR], *NTB*, 28.10.1992; «Russisk frykt for omfattende krig i Kaukasus» [Russian fear for comprehensive war in the Caucasus], *NTB* 10.11.1992; «Kaukasus- Kruttønna som kan eksplodere» [Caucasian powder barrel that might explode], *NTB*, 4.2.1993; «Ustabilitet» [Instability], *Dagens Næringsliv* 19.5.1993.

to be low.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, after about two months of bombardment from airplane raids, fierce ground combat and heavy casualties on both sides, the Russians captured the Chechen capital Grozny. The Chechen capital was almost levelled by the Russian bombing, and the civilians suffered badly during this phase of the war. Shamil Basaev, the young Chechen field commander formed the last Chechen military stand in Grozny, then withdrew his division and went into the villages and forests of the Chechen highland to lead guerrilla warfare.²⁰⁶

The first public Norwegian response to the Russian invasion came in a newspaper article in mid-December 1994. The article claimed that the Norwegian Defence Minister Kosmo had only *reluctantly* deprecated Russia's military invasion. The journalist continued by saying that: "Norway and other Western countries are apparently afraid to damage their relations with Russia, and prefer to consider the conflict as an internal Russian affair." Defence Minister Kosmo was quoted in the same article saying that he couldn't regard the Russian invasion *merely* as an internal Russian problem.²⁰⁷ Foreign Minister Godal's comments came two weeks later, on 2 January 1995, when he expressed his disappointment over the Kremlin's attitude on the matter. The Russian government would not listen to advice, to be "sensible" and end the military action, Godal exclaimed. Then he added to his comment that it was an internal Russian conflict.²⁰⁸

Siri Bjerke, State Secretary in the MFA, established in a news broadcast 7 January, that the Norwegian Foreign Ministry regarded the use of violence employed by the Kremlin as deeply disturbing. She declared that the MFA did *not* view the use of military force in Chechnya as an internal Russian affair, and underlined that Norway had protested to the Russian government.²⁰⁹

When Norwegian Defence Minister, Jørgen Kosmo, again commented on Russia's warfare in January 1995, he underscored the political unrest in the former Soviet Union and specifically remarked on what he called "a bloody and unintelligible war in Chechnya."²¹⁰ His address had a post-Cold War perspective and focused on what he regarded as challenges

²⁰⁵ «Fristen utløpt, Russiske fly på vingene» [Time limit expired, Russian fighters on their wings], *NTB*, 17.12.1994; Gall and Waal 1998: 16-17; Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal were both eyewitnesses in the first Chechen war where they worked as reporters; Lieven 1998: 107.

²⁰⁶ Gall and de Waal 1998: 226-227.

²⁰⁷ «Grozny under Russisk blokade» [Grozny under Russian blockade], *Aftenposten* 15.12.1994.

²⁰⁸ «Norge vil ha stans i kampene i Tsjetsjenia» [Norway calls for a halt in the fighting in Chechnya], *NTB*, 2.1.1995

²⁰⁹ «UD: Dyp uro over Russerners voldsbruk i Tsjetsjenia» [MFA: Deep concern of Russian violence in Chechnya], *NTB*, 7.1.1995

²¹⁰ [blodig og uforståelig oppgjør i Tsjetsjenia]; Statement to Oslo Militære Samfund [Oslo Military Society] by Defence Minister Jørgen Kosmo 9.1.1995, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Brundtland-III/fd/261248/261249/taler_-norges_forsvar,_hvor_star.html?id=261280

linked to the new foreign political situation. He characterized the Russian situation on the whole as uncertain and unstable: "The way the conflict in Chechnya is developing, it is obvious that it will have consequences for the domestic political situation in Russia. It is too early to indicate, what kind of effect this will have on political relations between Russia and Norway."²¹¹

These representatives of the Norwegian government did not seem to agree whether the conflict was an internal Russian matter or not. In a recent interview however, former Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal reiterated once more that the government had perceived it as an internal conflict.²¹² From the Norwegian government's point of view the eruption of conflict in Chechnya was at first seemingly perceived as one out of many domestic disturbances occurring in the wake of the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991.²¹³

In addition there was great scepticism about the invasion in the Russian society at the time.²¹⁴ This was also true among the officers in the Russian army.²¹⁵ Many officers foresaw a recurrence of the quagmire war the Soviet military had fought in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989.²¹⁶ Moral concerns were aired as well. A Russian general considered it a criminal act to use military force against the nation's own citizens, and resigned in protest. In the course of the war, more than 500 other officers followed his demonstrative action.²¹⁷ This scepticism in the Russian society was perceived as an indication that Russia was on the "right" and democratic path, and that the war would be brought to an end in the near future. It was to last over two years.

Receiving the news of the total destruction of Grozny, Foreign Minister Godal remarked on 9 January 1995 that he was horrified by the development in the Chechen conflict. "This is regular warfare", Godal said, seeming somewhat surprised. It seems as if the Norwegian MFA, as well as other Western governments, did not quite grasp the scope of the situation in the Chechen republic at first.²¹⁸

²¹¹ [Slik konflikten i Tsjetsjenia nå utvikler seg, er det åpenbart at den på sikt får innenrikspolitiske følger i Russland Hvilken betydning dette får for forholdet mellom Norge og Russland er ennå for tidlig å ha noen klar formening om.]; Ibid.

²¹² Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009.

²¹³ Kolstø 2000: 7-8, 213-214; Tishkov 1997: 47.

²¹⁴ Wagnsson 2000: 135-183.

²¹⁵ Gall and Waal 1998: 211.

²¹⁶ Ibid: 176-177.

²¹⁷ Lieven 1998: 89, 106; «Russisk general nekter å innta Grosny» [Russian general refuses to siege Grozny], *NTB*, 16.12.1994.

²¹⁸ «Granatene regner over Grosnyj og kritikken øker» [Grenades keep pouring over Grozny and the criticism accrues], *NTB* 9.1.1995.

WESTERN REACTIONS AND RESPONSES

Most Western government's reacted strongly to the Russian warfare in Chechnya. Norway's reaction towards the invasion did not differ from the general set of reactions among Western European governments. Along with the Russian decision makers that launched the military operation, it seems as if most Western powers believed that it would be a short military operation to wipe out the Dudaev regime and stabilize the area. They were all surprised at the resistance that met the Russian soldiers. The Chechen people united behind a regime that was rather unpopular with most part of the Chechen population. This had not been foreseen by Russian authorities who, it has been claimed, thought they would be received as liberators.²¹⁹ The invasion quickly turned into a quagmire for the Russian military. Thus, the consequences of a prolonged armed conflict started to appear on television screens throughout the world.

The devastating images made it harder for the Western governments to publicly support Russia's military effort to preserve territorial integrity by such brutal means. When asked what his immediate response to the news of the invasion was, Godal claimed years afterwards that his principal worry had been the civilians situation. He had felt: "a strong surmise that human rights were not first priority among the Russian military forces."²²⁰ War brings out the best and the worst no matter who is involved and the Russian army had a reputation of faltering discipline in its ranks.²²¹ The decade that had commenced with optimism regarding freedom and democracy in Russia was taking an ugly turn.

The French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe warned Russia that a prolonged military campaign could damage Russia's efforts to get more involved in Europe. He added that if Russia continued to undermine human rights in the Chechen area then the French reactions would come in much harsher terms.²²² The German Chancellor expressed his opinion by saying that the Russian military campaign towards Grozny was "pure madness". Vice-President of the USA, Al Gore, claimed he had warned the Russians in December 1994 not to go through with the military campaign.²²³

To most of the Western governments, the criticism remained rhetorical.²²⁴ This does not necessarily mean that it cannot be considered as a form of sanction. According to historian Quentin Skinner words and theories are not empty phrases. Rather, they are conscious and

²¹⁹ Gakaev 2005: 22.

²²⁰ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009.

²²¹ Said 2007: 135.

²²² «Granatene regner over Grosnyj og kritikken øker», *NTB*, 9.1.1995.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ «Økende vestlig bekymring over russisk felttog» [Increasing Western concern over Russian military campaign], *NTB*, 3.1.1995; «Granatene regner over Grosnyj og kritikken øker», *NTB*, 9.1.1995.

mindful attempts to alter and reinterpret the world through the words that are chosen to describe it. The battle for words and definitions is an attempt to influence how the world is arranged through the attempt to dictate how we understand and talk about it. Skinner distinguishes the importance of how legitimacy is conditioned by the reigning linguistic and political universe. This limits the potential legitimization and thus the potential act. It is even more important that if someone wants to achieve change, they have to be able to legitimize it.²²⁵

In accordance with this thinking, Norwegian authorities did not just utter critical words towards Russia by condemning its invasion of Chechnya, but actually acted by condemning Russia's action. It can thus be considered a Norwegian political act in the same way as launching a sanction of sorts against Russia. Also by uttering a condemnation together with several other governments Norway took part in establishing what was a state's legitimate conduct or behaviour at that time. The condemnation can be seen as an effort to make Russia's decision makers change their minds about the military intervention and make them see that it was not the right way to proceed to solve the conflict.

As Yeltsin was making efforts to establish a Western inspired state and society, this effort of trying to make Russia "ashamed" of its conduct in Chechnya may have been effective in the first period. Norwegian diplomats and Foreign Minister Godal also "felt" that this approach had an effect on the Russian decision makers and that a common understanding existed.²²⁶

The Danish government became the exception among the Western governments early on. Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helvig Petersen was one of the more critically outspoken Western politicians, who also put some practical measure behind his statement.²²⁷ The Danish government postponed ratifying the Partnership for Peace Treaty (PFP) as a direct consequence of the military invasion. The PFP had been launched at the NATO Brussels summit in January 1994. The intention with the PFP was to facilitate transparency in national defence planning, budgeting processes, the democratic control over defence forces, as well as enhancing respective peacekeeping abilities and capabilities through joint planning and exercises.²²⁸

²²⁵ Frank Beck Lassen & Mikkel Thorup, «Introduktion til Quentin Skinner og intellektuel historie», in Quentin Skinner, *Politik og historie*, København 2009: 10.

²²⁶ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009

²²⁷ «Økende vestlig bekymring over russisk felttog», *NTB*, 3.1.1995.

²²⁸ Wagnsson, 2000: 82.

Nonetheless, despite Gore's initial statements, Yeltsin soon received support and understanding for the intervention from Warren Christopher and William Perry, respectively USA's Secretary of State and Defence, and eventually also from President Clinton himself.²²⁹ What brought on this ambivalence in the Western governments' reactions? An anonymous diplomat stated one of the first days of January 1995 that the West was placing all their bets on Yeltsin. The diplomat's cynical conclusion was that it was not worth spoiling Western relations with the Kremlin over the conflict in Chechnya.²³⁰ The diplomat's analysis has since been backed up by researchers and academics. "On the issue of Chechnya, the self-interest of states and the international organizations in preserving good relations with Russia, and protecting the material dimension of the relations, has consistently trumped concerns over other more value-based issues such as democratization and human rights".²³¹ The West had formerly put all their money on another horse, namely Gorbachev, who was ousted from power in 1991.²³² The track favourite had become Yeltsin.

"In terms of scale and abandonment of international laws on rules of engagement, Chechnya was comparable to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unlike Milosevic, however, Yeltsin was a reformer considered to be sympathetic, compliant even, to Western interests."²³³ The West had invested in the success of Yeltsin's domestic reforms and was not going to abandon him over Chechnya.²³⁴ It is asserted by many that the USA and the Western European states did not pressurize Yeltsin during the first war mainly for fear of damaging the more important strategy of keeping Yeltsin in power.²³⁵ Lecturer of politics at the University of East Anglia, Mike Bowker's presentation of Western responses in his article "Western views of Chechen conflict" pretty much sums it up:

Thus throughout the crisis the Western governments have always publicly backed Moscow's policy on Chechnya. The West has refused to recognize Chechnya's claim, and has accepted Moscow's right to defend its territorial integrity, if necessary by force (*jus ad bellum*). On the other hand, the West has occasionally spoken out against Russia's conduct in the war and the violation of human rights by the Russian authorities (*jus in bello*), but it has always been reluctant to back such rhetoric with any kind of meaningful sanction.²³⁶

229 Mike Bowker, «Western views of the Chechen conflict» in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005: 229; Hughes 2007: 129.

²³⁰ «Økende vestlig bekymring over russisk felttog», *NTB*, 3.1.1995.

²³¹ Hughes 2007: 128.

²³² «Økende vestlig bekymring over russisk felttog», *NTB*, 3.1.1995.

²³³ Hughes, 2007: 129.

²³⁴ Bowker 2005: 229.

²³⁵ Hughes 2007: 129.

²³⁶ Bowker 2007: 223.

SECESSION – AN UNWANTED CHILD OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The emphasis on territorial integrity is an important explanatory factor of how Norway and the West in general dealt with the Russian warfare. The West sympathized with Russia's loss of territory compared to the geography in the days of the USSR. Professor in Russian regional studies at the Norwegian Institute for Foreign Affairs (NUPI) Iver B. Neumann argued that this was the reason for Godal's careful comments on the matter. In addition did neither Germany nor Norway favour a situation with a large country in a labile fragmenting situation, Neumann stated.²³⁷

In accordance with Neumann's analysis, State Secretary Jan Egeland defended the Norwegian policy from accusations of being too mild towards the military invasion. He firmly established that Norway had never recognized Chechnya as an independent state, nor had any other country for that matter.²³⁸ Egeland stated that there was a difference in regards of the Baltic nations that had received support from Norway in their struggle for independence and Chechnya. Russia had ruled Chechnya for a much longer period of time and Chechnya had not been a sovereign state before the USSR, as the Baltic nations had been.²³⁹ Egeland also claimed that if Chechnya or any other regions within Russia wanted to claim their independence, this had to be done by peaceful means.²⁴⁰ The fact that Russia had invaded Chechnya three years after its sovereignty claim, and that the Chechen secession had not been an act of war, was not considered in his comment. Neither did he discuss the fact that Chechnya had never actually recognized Russian rule. In the article he supported the political custom that had developed with the dissolution of the communist unions Yugoslavia and USSR.²⁴¹

Foreign Minister Godal was clear on this point in the interview, where he stated that the Norwegian government had been resolute not to support a separatist movement in Russia at the time. Norway did not want a more fragmented Russia. This was, he said, a foreign political concern that Norway shared with other governments.²⁴² Throughout the winter of 1995, statements by France, Germany, and the USA supported this line of thought.²⁴³

²³⁷ «Russerne frykter muslimsk løsrivelse» [Russia fears Muslim secession], *NTB*, 2.1.1995.

²³⁸ «Feil om Tsjetsjenia» [Wrong about Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995.

²³⁹ «Indre anliggende» [Internal Affair], *Aftenposten*, 7.1.1995

²⁴⁰ «Feil om Tsjetsjenia», *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009.

²⁴³ «Økende vestlig bekymring over russisk felttog», *NTB*, 3.1.1995; «Granatene regner over Grosnyj og kritikken øker», *NTB*, 9.1.1995.

Thus, when US president Bill Clinton, in one of his more spectacular speeches, compared Yeltsin with Lincoln and the Chechen war with the Civil War in the United States of America in the 1860s, he made clear an important point about secession: it is unwanted in today's world of international politics.²⁴⁴ In the article "The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States", Professor of Russian and Central European and Balkan Area Studies Pål Kolstø enunciate this: "In the post WWII period, the unwritten rules of international relations have contained extremely strong restrictions against the creation of new states."²⁴⁵ Further, he added that secessionist states will in "most cases – eventually be reabsorbed into the parent state or agree to an autonomous status within the parent state in a federal arrangement. This last outcome is the preferred option of the international community."²⁴⁶

Iver B. Neumann (NUPI) summed up the Norwegian response in four key terms in accordance with Kolstø's view: internal affairs; territorial sovereignty/integrity; international consensus; and diplomacy. He mentioned that there had been approaches by Western governments towards the Kremlin, i.e. diplomatic attempts in regards of the Chechen conflict. But these attempts were exception, because most of the political world outside Russia had responded carefully, and there had been put little pressure on the Kremlin in this particular matter. Neumann's arguments were in line with the narrative above, but he went even further by narrowing it down to one word: *realpolitik*.²⁴⁷

It seems obvious in the Norwegian government's response that it wanted to keep in line with the rest of the western world. There was of course no way of knowing how the conflict would develop and the responses that came from the MFA have to be seen in light of this. The Russian military campaign was legitimized by the Kremlin through the argument of preserving territorial integrity. The conflict was by the Norwegian Government perceived as an internal separatist conflict, to avoid further encroachment of Russia's territorial integrity.²⁴⁸ As showed above, this was also to a certain extent seen as legitimate by most of Western governments.²⁴⁹ There was an international consensus that this kind of secession was unwanted and an understanding that Russia *had to* go to war to avoid further disintegration. Diplomatic activity to preserve good relations with the Yeltsin government was first priority.

²⁴⁴ Bowker 2005: 225.

²⁴⁵ Pål Kolstø, «The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States», in *Journal of Peace Research* 2006, 6: 736.

²⁴⁶ Kolstø 2006: 723.

²⁴⁷ «Russerne frykter muslimsk løsrivelse», *NTB*, 2.1.1995.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Hughes 2007: 128-134.

Yet, there was a Western ambivalence in the reaction to the military invasion due to the “excesses” and “lack of proportionality” in the Russian response to the Chechen insurgency.²⁵⁰ The outrage and unpopularity the military invasion caused both inside and outside Russia, and the availability of the conflict through mass media forced the Western government's to respond.

The response however, except for Denmark's sanctions of postponing agreements, was mostly diplomatic and performed through “Skinnerian” speech-acts, such as condemnations of the disproportionate use of violence. No other practical political, economic or military sanctions were effectuated. However, what means did the Norway have to affect the situation in Chechnya? In accordance with the general international pattern of response and motion of disdain towards the Russian military action, Foreign Minister Godal sent a letter of protest to his Russian colleague Andrej Kosyrev.²⁵¹

GODAL'S LETTER TO KOSYREV

Norway's Ambassador in Moscow, Per Tresselt, delivered Godal's letter to Andrej Kosyrev. In the letter Godal demanded that the fighting should come to a complete halt and negotiations had to be initiated. Godal's letter maintained that “the situation in Chechnya is not only a tragedy to the area itself and Russia, but to the entire international community”. Godal demanded full stop in the war in order to start negotiations.²⁵²

Furthermore, the letter suggested that the conflict could threaten the democratic reform process in Russia, and encumber on the many parties involved in the reforming process. It stressed the violations of basic human rights that the civilian population was being subjected to by Russian forces. Godal stated in the letter that the conflict could not be solved by military means. In addition, it was of the greatest importance that the International Red Cross and United Nation's High Commissioner of Refugees was given the opportunity to assist with humanitarian aid. Increasingly many Chechen civilians became internally displaced (IDPs) and the civilian populations were suffering severely. Shortly after the Russian invasion, in December 1994, Norwegian Ambassador Tresselt offered Norwegian humanitarian aid at a

²⁵⁰ «Norge vil ha stans i kampene i Tsjetsjenia» [Norway calls for a halt in the fighting in Chechnya], *NTB*, 2.1.1995; Hughes 2007: 128-134.

²⁵¹ «Utenriksminister Godal protesterer i Kreml» [Foreign Minister Godal protests to the Kremlin], *NTB*, 9.1.1995.

²⁵² «Utenriksminister Godal protesterer i Kreml», *NTB*, 9.1.1995.

meeting with Russian authorities. The offer, however, was declined as the Russians told Tresselt that the situation did not call for it.²⁵³

Godal's letter requested, furthermore, that his Russian colleague Andrej Kosyrev should work with international organizations to find a solution, primarily through the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Looking back, Godal believed that the Russians had listened to the criticism that came with regards to the conflict. He argued that Norway was the one country, within the NATO framework, that Russia at the time had close and good relations with. Godal thought this created some Russian goodwill towards Norway. He added, however, that the Russian reactions to Norwegian criticism ranged from total rejection and accusations of false propaganda to sincere reflection over the situation.²⁵⁴ Russian Foreign Minister Kosyrev had been appointed Prime Minister by Boris Yeltsin in October 1990.²⁵⁵ He had been elected to the State Duma through the Murmansk Oblast in North West Russia and was rather Western-oriented. Although Godal felt he and his Russian counterpart were on the same wavelength, Kosyrev's views on matters were not necessarily shared by his colleagues in the Russian government.²⁵⁶ Godal stated time and again the need to involve the OSCE, but he avoided suggesting whom within the OSCE that should take the lead.²⁵⁷

The OSCE had only a couple of years before developed from the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe into an organization broadly recognized from West to East. Russia was already integrated in the OSCE, and therefore it was considered even more appropriate to deal with the conflict there. Russia was very sympathetic to the OSCE, and wanted to see OSCE become an alternative to NATO.²⁵⁸ Russian military intervention in Chechnya broke several agreements within the OSCE and other agreements and treaties Russia had inherited through the USSR. This is also true whether the Russo-Chechen conflict was perceived as an internal affair or not, or whether Russia's right to intervene with armed forces was recognized or not.²⁵⁹ In this regard, Russia undermined the legitimacy of the organization it constantly promoted to be the main organization for security in Europe.

²⁵³ «Utenriksminister Godal protesterer i Kreml», *NTB*, 9.1.1995.

²⁵⁴ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009.

²⁵⁵ Helge Blakkisrud, «Et Russland i Endring», in Even Lange, Helge Pharo, og Øyvind Østerud (ed.), *Vendepunkter i norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen*, Oslo 2009: 211.

²⁵⁶ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009

²⁵⁷ «Norge vil ha stans i kampene i Tsjetsjenia», *NTB*, 2.1.1995

²⁵⁸ Wagnsson 2000: 85.

²⁵⁹ «Forsvarsminister Kosmo urolig: Jeltsin kan ha tapt kontrollen» [Defence Minister Kosmo worried: Yeltsin may have lost control], *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995.

NATIONAL SECURITY AT THE CROSSROADS

In 1995 Norway was at the crossroads with regards to national security and defence policy, and this may have affected how Norway related to the Russian invasion. Russia was in a labile state and still a powerful neighbour with massive military resources. It was at this time also on the warpath in its own state. Norway was still a small state dependant on importing security. The international security structure was rapidly changing and for Norway it was important to keep up, especially with the changes in NATO and the EU. After preserving western security since 1949, NATO lost its *raison d'être* when the Warsaw Pact dissolved. With the fall of the iron curtain a lot of the member states wondered what would happen to the Alliance. Some believed it would be dissolved. However, NATO had been tailored into a modern suit. At the 1990 NATO summit in London, it became clear that the organization had “both the will and the ability to reform itself in order to meet new challenges.”²⁶⁰ NATO established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NACC, to include the former East Bloc nations in a consultative relationship. In 1994 the Partnership for Peace was instituted. This programme took NACC a step further with the same countries being able to cooperate with the alliance about defence strategy, military planning and participation in peacekeeping activities.²⁶¹

Through President Yeltsin the Russian Federation had moved toward cooperation with NATO, and NATO had established a permanent joint council to include Russia on a permanent basis. From the beginning of the process Norway had stressed the need for an open dialogue with Russia on the broader problem of European security. In this regard Norway had initiated the Euro-Arctic Barents Sea programme to transcend borders that had been impossible during the Cold War.²⁶² According to Foreign Minister Godal, Norway had a more open and close dialogue with Russia than any other Western government.²⁶³ Increasingly deeper disagreements between Washington and EU over security related issues came to the fore in this period. Norway was still a member of NATO and a neighbour to Russia, but also one of three European nations *outside* the EU, after the Norwegian population once again had turned down membership in the 1994 referendum. The first had been in 1972.²⁶⁴ The power triangle consisting of EU, USA and Russia was somewhat imbalanced to Norway. If the USA decided to pull out attention and efforts from Europe, Norway would be dependant on the EU.

²⁶⁰ Riste 2005: 279.

²⁶¹ Ibid: 279.

²⁶² Ibid: 279.

²⁶³ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009.

²⁶⁴ Tamnes 1997: 153.

The attention towards the so-called High North where Russia and Norway meets also received less attention from NATO and EU in this period.²⁶⁵

Efforts in the EU towards creating a common foreign policy through the European Political Cooperation, EPC, were steadily becoming more effective. Causing more concern with the Norwegian government, perhaps, was the efforts towards revitalizing the Western European Union, EU's Defence and Security arm.²⁶⁶ The Norwegian government feared that Norway could become completely sidelined in Europe and completely dependent on the US. As a result, Norwegian national security became a prominent issue for the government.²⁶⁷ Godal told the Norwegian parliament that remaining outside the EU, Norway had fewer possibilities of safeguarding its own interests. He claimed that Norway was marginalized in the establishment of an international framework, where Norway as a member could have promoted its own interests. The foreign minister pressed the importance of bilateral relations with the respective European nations to keep at least one foot inside Europe. In addition, he said, it became more important for Norway to make efforts in the international forums where Norway was a full member, for instance NATO and the UN.

What happened with regard to the EU would to a large degree be decisive to how the relations of the Central- and Eastern European countries and how NATO developed.²⁶⁸ Godal was accused by several Parliament members of "whimpering" over loosing the national referendum on Norwegian membership in the EU. The Labour Party wanted membership in the European Union and considered it a serious problem to remain an outsider. The political parties opposed to Norwegian membership in contrast perceived it as an advantage.²⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the labour government perception of this as a problem made them work intensely to secure Norwegian interests from outside the European Union.

PROMOTING NATO'S ENLARGEMENT

NATO had concurrently with EU's enlargement, announced ambitions to extend the list of members. This would have political implications on the Russo-Norwegian relations. Russia was not particularly fond of the idea, and Norway supported it. From the Norwegian government's point of view a NATO enlargement should be in accordance with other integration processes in Europe and strengthen European cooperation structures. The

²⁶⁵ Skogan 2003: 43.

²⁶⁶ Riste 2005: 278.

²⁶⁷ Ibid: 278.

²⁶⁸ St. tid. [Parliament Proceedings] pp. 1923-1930 (1994-95): 1926, Statement to the Parliament on foreign affairs by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal, 19.1.1995

²⁶⁹ St. tid. pp. 2005-2079 (1994-95): 2011,

government wanted to make sure that a NATO enlargement in an eastern direction, incorporating Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary, would unite the need to preserve the alliance's core functions with a broader European perspective.²⁷⁰

According to Godal it was vital for Europe that the relations between the USA and Russia were in a manner of cooperation and not confrontation. Russia needed to be part of the all-European cooperation processes and not isolated, he said. Norway's security was greatly affected by the development of Central and Eastern European countries' relations with both NATO and the EU. Norway had important interests to preserve due to its geopolitical situation and being Russia's neighbour.²⁷¹ Norway's efforts in preserving good relations with both Russia and NATO, was a solid Norwegian tradition, consistent with Norway's policy towards the Soviet Union throughout long stretches of the Cold War.²⁷²

With his eyes fixed on Russia, Godal meant that it was apparent that the foreign political- and security situation had changed the last years. Godal claimed that the war in Chechnya was an illustration of the conflict potential in a new era. The explosion of ethnic conflicts in the nineties created uncertainties and chaotic discomfort. The new challenges for regional security in regards of the extended security idiom of many small ethnic conflicts could not be handled by NATO alone in Godal's opinion.²⁷³

On 9 March 1995 Foreign Minister Godal held an address on security issues at an international conference at Bolkesjø.²⁷⁴ He claimed that it was very important for Norway to have regular and close contact with both NATO *and* the Kremlin in the process of an eastward bound NATO enlargement. The speech was focused on Russia's position. Godal said that time had come to formalize the relationship between Russia and NATO. This could take place in the shape of a cooperation agreement that reflected Russia's special position in Europe, as a regional great power. One natural aspect would be to have regular meetings at different political levels. "Strengthening the relations with Russia is perhaps the single most important factor to hamper new confrontations and deviations in Europe."²⁷⁵ Godal's statement with its emphasis on Russia underscored how momentous this was in the eyes of the Norwegian government. The liberal perspective is here obvious. Stressing the importance of

²⁷⁰ St. tid. pp. 1923-1930 (1994-95): 1926; Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to international relations Theories and approaches*, Oxford 2003: 92.

²⁷¹ St. tid. pp. 1923-1930 (1994-95): 1926.

²⁷² Rolf Tamnes, «Et større Norge», in Even Lange, Helge Pharao og Øyvind Østerud (ed.), *Vendepunkter i Norsk Utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen*, Oslo 2009: 311.

²⁷³ St. tid. pp. 1923-1930 (1994-95): 1926-1927.

²⁷⁴ «Utenriksministeren: Russland må ikke isoleres» [Foreign Minister: Russia must not be Isolated], *Aftenposten*, 10.3.1995

²⁷⁵ «Utenriksministeren: Russland må ikke isoleres», *Aftenposten*, 10.3.1995.

incorporating Russia into Western structures shows how Norway tried to use international political structures to stabilize Russia's position, and thus, promote its own security.

Godal made it clear that to enlarge NATO was not an unfriendly act towards Russia. He said this was very important to emphasize, "given that Norway and Russia are neighbours". He wanted to ensure that Russia was not faced with unpleasant surprises and that the cooperation was bilateral. However, this did not mean that Russia had a veto, and further that the Russians would have to agree to certain fundamental principles. "The actions and events in Chechnya is a dramatic example to a conflict we cannot accept".²⁷⁶ Godal's language in this speech demonstrates Norway's clear support for the NATO enlargement, while at the same time appeasing Russia's aversion to this action.²⁷⁷

In November 1995 State Secretary Siri Bjerke met with the Russian Vice Secretary of the Russian National Security Council, Vladimir Rubanov, to discuss the upcoming election of the State Duma (the Russian Parliament) and NATO's enlargement in an eastern direction. Rubanov was originally in Oslo to attend an academic conference on the conflict situation in the Caucasus, but agreed to meet with the Norwegian MFA.²⁷⁸ According to Bjerke their conversation dealt with general issues, and no bilateral issues or problems were brought up. Rubanov claimed that both Russia and Norway wanted stability in Europe and that the peace negotiations in Chechnya strengthened the possibilities for a peace arrangement at that point in the war.²⁷⁹

Bjerke emphasized that from a Norwegian point of view, it was important that NATO had a central part to play in the development of the new security structures in Europe. However, she also underscored that the relations with Russia needed to be strengthened, because Russia's role in the new European security structures was vital.²⁸⁰ The early 1990s was perceived as a change of paradigm in Western relations with Russia, and Bjerke showed how important it was perceived to be to include Russia in this. However, Russia was invited on Western premises. If the choice was up to Russia, OSCE would have replaced NATO.²⁸¹

Bjerke maintained that Norway supported the enlargement of NATO, but asserted to Rubanov that it was going to take some time before the enlargement would take place. She said that Norway understood the Russian concern with regards to the enlargement. Rubanov,

²⁷⁶ «Utenriksministeren: Russland må ikke isoleres», *Aftenposten*, 10.3.1995

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ «Viktige drøftinger med russisk toppbyråkrat» [Important consultations with leading Russian bureaucrat], *NTB*, 24.11.1995

²⁷⁹ «Viktige drøftinger med russisk toppbyråkrat», *NTB*, 24.11.1995.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Wagnsson 2000: 85.

on his part, focused on specific areas of cooperation with NATO, not least within the framework of Partnership for Peace. The opposition against NATO enlargement was huge in Russia, and several leading politicians had strongly spoken out against it and criticized the Western position in this matter. The only clear exception to the many different views on the outlining of foreign policy in Russia was exactly the unanimous protests against NATO enlargement.²⁸² From the Russian side it had frequently been repeated that a NATO enlargement would bring the alliance's eastern borders all the way up against Russian territory.²⁸³

RUSSIA – A MOMENTUM OF WORRY IN NORWAY

The Chechen conflict caused great concern in Norway. Defence Minister Jørgen Kosmo claimed that he feared that Yeltsin had lost control over the military. He was also worried about the reports of massive human rights violations in Chechnya.²⁸⁴ It seems as if Norwegian decision makers did not know what to make of the Russian authorities at the time. They expressed themselves in worried, even, astonished terms regarding the Russian authority's actions and declarations. "Next month we're heading to Washington D. C. to discuss these issues", Kosmo told the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*.²⁸⁵

It was the development in Russia that concerned Kosmo the most. The Defence Council was called upon for the first time in many years. It had been established in 1934 and functioned as a forum of meetings between the Norwegian military and political leadership. There had been regular meeting activity between 1948 and 1955, but from the late fifties the meetings occurred sporadically. Eventually the Council had become a peripheral institution and a debate forum for discussions on budgetary questions. This was seen as a token of the supremacy of the political leadership in Norway and shows that the military leadership had less influence on the creation of Norwegian security policy.²⁸⁶

Kosmo thought there were obvious reasons to be alarmed by what was happening in Russia at the time. The situation in Chechnya gave the impression that there had not been any good coordination between the civilian leadership and the military leadership. In regards to the civilian management of the Russian army, it had been somewhat of a worrying-factor to

²⁸² Wagnsson 2000: 79.

²⁸³ «Viktige drøftinger med russisk toppbyråkrat», *NTB*, 24.11.1995

²⁸⁴ «Forsvarsminister Kosmo urolig: Jeltsin kan ha tapt kontrollen», *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Knut Einar Eriksen og Helge Øystein Pharo, *Kald Krig og internasjonalisering 1949-1965*, bd. 5 av *Norsk Utenrikspolitisk historie* [*Cold War and internationalisation*, vol. 5 of *Norway's Foreign Political History*], Oslo 1997: 23.

the Norwegian Authorities the last couple of years.²⁸⁷ Senior Researcher Neumann said that it was not clear how the decision to invade Chechnya had come about. He hypothesized that it could be the military trying to cover up problems among its top brass. Signals had also pointed in the direction of a more political active military and that they were already controlling parts of Moldova and Tadzhikistan through political influence.²⁸⁸ The state Duma had been sidelined in its opposition to the invasion of Chechnya. It had voted forth a resolution stating that the handling of the crisis was unsatisfactorily. The resolution was reportedly barely commented on by Yeltsin's staff. It seemed as if Yeltsin's government as such had little to do with the decision, but that the responsibility was to be found in the Russian Security Council.²⁸⁹

“What is happening in Chechnya clearly shows Kremlin's lack of ability to handle domestic political issues in a common political and democratic way. This does not make us feel safer. It is too early to draw conclusions of what we are now observing in Russia”, Kosmo stated.²⁹⁰ He had noticed that some Russian political commentators had observed tendencies to a more authoritarian and centralized governing. He continued his statement by saying that if this were the case, it would have clear implications for Norwegian politics. The situation, in Kosmo's view, did not encourage relaxing Norwegian security policy in the high north.²⁹¹ Kosmo was seemingly not very optimistic on behalf of Russia's democratic development. What implications Kosmo were thinking of can only be guessed at, but it seems as if he thought Norway would not have the stabile, European and democratic Russia that it had imagined in 1991 as a neighbour in the near future.

Kosmo remarked that Russia's behaviour in Chechnya was a violation of international agreements and conventions Russia had signed and inherited directly from the Soviet Union. First and foremost, regarding to basic human rights and the civilian population's right to protection in crisis and conflict: “The systematic bombing of apartment flat areas is clearly in violation of humanitarian law.” The Defence Minister wanted the Council of Europe and the UN to apply pressure on the Kremlin.²⁹² He did not, however, say in what way this should be done. Kosmo was considerably more outspoken than his colleague, foreign minister Godal, when he commented on the situation in Chechnya.

²⁸⁷ «Forsvarsminister Kosmo urolig: Jeltsin kan ha tapt kontrollen», *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995

²⁸⁸ «Russerne frykter muslimsk løsrivelse», *NTB*, 2.1.1995

²⁸⁹ «En advarsel til Russland's naboer» [A warning to Russia's neighbours], *Aftenposten*, 6.1.1995

²⁹⁰ «Forsvarsminister Kosmo urolig: Jeltsin kan ha tapt kontrollen», *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995

²⁹¹ Ibid

²⁹² Ibid.

Senior Researcher Neumann remarked that Norway had been caught in a jam with regards to its great neighbour. As the rest of the West, Norway feared that Chechnya was only the first target and that the next thing to go could be the entire reform policy and glasnost. Although Godal had protested concerning Chechnya, Neumann did not think that Norway dared to take their criticism too far without broad backup. Norway was a vulnerable small neighbour state, he stressed.²⁹³ The tendency was that Norway criticized the violations of international laws and human rights violations, but was ambivalent as to how eventual sanctions should be initiated.

State Secretary Siri Bjerke in the MFA confirmed Neumann's assumptions. She said that the war in Chechnya was a serious strain on the dialogue between Western governments and the Kremlin. However, "eventual economical sanctions or non-dialogue with Russia is out of the question. That is not a solution, and can have unprecedented consequences for Norway."²⁹⁴ Bjerke stated that Norway's policy was *political* pressure on Russia, support to the OSCE's presence in the conflict area, and humanitarian aid.²⁹⁵ The political pressure consisted as far as can be seen, of communicating to Russia that its actions in Chechnya were unacceptable. In a constructivist perspective this is in accordance with the idea that actors can have definition power and thus define what legitimate conduct is. Norway was here taking part together with other Western governments in defining what was legitimate conduct, and "trying to convince" Russian authorities of this. As the Western governments in many ways had monopoly on this structural ideological power, it can also be considered in a realist perspective of strategic use of soft power. Bjerke made the point that Norway's decision makers perceived their options as few in regards of responding to the conflict situation.

Although Norway had little hard power to place behind its condemnations, there were other options. Denmark, for instance, set an example with its postponement of agreements with Russia. Why did not Norway perform similar actions on their many fields of cooperation with Russia? Was Norway afraid of its grand neighbour? State Secretary Bjerke did not elaborate on what was encapsulated in the expression "unprecedented consequences" in response to eventual Norwegian sanctions. It probably did not refer to a potential Russian military invasion. Still, it may have referred to the fear that Russia would sabotage cooperation in areas essential to Norway, for instance the cooperation to destruct nuclear

²⁹³ «Kommentar: Norges utenrikspolitiske sårbarhet» [Leading comment: Norway's Foreign Political Vulnerability], *Aftenposten*, 19.1.1995.

²⁹⁴ «Kritisk for sivile i Tsjetsjenia» [Critical for civilians in Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 31.1.1995.

²⁹⁵ «Kritisk for sivile i Tsjetsjenia», *Aftenposten*, 31.1.1995.

waste in the High North. Norway had more at stake than Denmark, which did not share borders or bilateral administration of natural resources with Russia.

NORWEGIAN HUMANITARIAN AID

In response to the military invasion and the ongoing war, Norway could, in addition to attempting to convince Russian authorities to end the war, assist with humanitarian aid. In early January 1995 Siri Bjerke encouraged Norwegian NGO's in a news-broadcast to contribute with humanitarian aid in Chechnya. She avowed that the MFA would regard all initiatives for humanitarian aid as positive and that the MFA would support these by economic means.²⁹⁶ Initially the Norwegian government gave two million Norwegian *kroner* (NOK) to the International Red Cross.²⁹⁷

However, two million NOK and two months later, the NGOs that had applied for economical means had not received the support they had been promised. Stein Støa of the Norwegian Refugee Council had asked for 9 million NOK in humanitarian aid to help Chechen refugees. After a month they had not received an answer. Støa suggested that it was a problem of bureaucratic tardiness. He saw the authorities' lack of response as "incredible". Applications for humanitarian aid usually moved with speed through the system but apparently not this time, he said.²⁹⁸ Yet, the MFA's press spokesman Ingvard Havnen rejected the accusation of bureaucratic tardiness. He claimed that it was hard to find cover for it in the MFA's budget, and added that there was no intention of handing out more money at the present time.²⁹⁹ Then on 16 March 1995, the MFA gave seven million NOK in humanitarian aid divided between the Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Refugee Council, the Norwegian Church Aid and the UN High Commissioner of Refugees.³⁰⁰

Gunnar Andersen, also in the Norwegian Refugee Council, summed up his view on the situation in an interview in mid-March. He claimed that the Norwegian MFA had used too long a time on the treatment of the applications for humanitarian aid to Chechnya. 5-6 weeks passed before they received a response to the applications and UN appeals for economic support. In addition, he thought that Norway gave too little economical support to ease what

²⁹⁶ «UD: Dyp uro over Russerners voldsbruk i Tsjetsjenia», *NTB*, 7.1.1995.

²⁹⁷ St. tid. pp. 1923-1930 (1994-95): 1927.

²⁹⁸ «UD somler med å gitte støtte til Tsjetsjenske flyktninger» [MFA dawdles to give aid to Chechen refugees], *NTB*, 13.3.1995.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ «Norsk nødhjelp til Tsjetsjenia» [Norwegian Humanitarian Aid to Chechnya], *NTB*, 16.3 1995.

he called a humanitarian catastrophe in the North Caucasus.³⁰¹ Andersen argued that both the slow treatment and the low amount granted, was connected to the fact that Russia was not on the OECD-countries list of states that could receive aid. He stated that political will could have overcome these types of bureaucratic hinders.³⁰² In October 1995 a press release stated that the MFA gave a new nine million NOK in support of the humanitarian situation in Chechnya. The press release stated that by this additional support, Norway had in total contributed with 18 million NOK the first year of the war. The contribution was assigned the continued precarious situation of the civilians in Chechnya.³⁰³

Compared to other conflict and humanitarian catastrophes Norway has given little support to Chechnya. Compared to the humanitarian support given to the former Yugoslavia, the Chechen humanitarian crises received small amounts. Between 1991 and January 1995 Norway supported Yugoslavia with 400 million NOK in humanitarian aid. This was the largest humanitarian effort in Norwegian history.³⁰⁴ By anticipating the events and jumping forwards in time, this is made even clearer: In 1999 when two humanitarian crises unfolded one after the other in Kosovo and Chechnya, Norway allocated NOK 575 million to Kosovo.³⁰⁵ What was allocated to the situation in Chechnya and the humanitarian crises is not to be found in any gathered total.

Perusing the 1999 and 2001 annual reports for Norwegian engagement for human rights, Russia and areas within Russia are not enlisted in the statistics. Chechnya is mentioned in the reports, but is not to be found on the statistical overview.³⁰⁶ In oral question-time on 19 January 2000 foreign minister Vollebæk was asked about what efforts had been made by Norway to ease the humanitarian situation in Chechnya. Vollebæk responded that Norway had been among the first to contribute with economical aid to the area. He continued by stating that: “up till now NOK 20.3 million kroner has been distributed to this end.”³⁰⁷ The

³⁰¹ «Flyktningerådet: Sommel og byråkrati i UD» [Refugee Council: Tardiness and Bureaucracy in the MFA], *NTB*, 17.3.1995.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ «Nye 9 millioner i nødhjelp til Tsjetsjenia», Press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30.10.1995, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/regjeringen-brundtland-iii/ud/Nyheter-og-pressemeldinger/1995/nye_9_millioner_i_nodhjelp_til.html?id=235645 (13.5.2010)

³⁰⁴ St. tid. pp. 2130-2136 (1995-96): 2132.

³⁰⁵ Briefing to the Parliament on the situation in Kosovo and the rest of the region, by Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, 7.6.1999, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/1999/proposal_for_a_peace_plan_for_kosovo.html?id=263443 (13.5.2010)

³⁰⁶ Menneskerettigheter 2001: http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-II/ud/Rapporter-og-planer/2002/menneskerettigheter_2001.html?id=260400; MR: Årsrapport 1999: http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-I/ud/Rapporter-og-planer/2000/mr-arsrapport_1999.html?id=260100 (13.5.2010)

³⁰⁷ Oral Question Hour in the Parliament, question no. 3, 19 January 2000, <http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/1999-2000/000119/ordinarsporretime/3/> (13.5.2010)

foreign minister ended his reply by stating that the government would consider giving more money if it received an appeal for aid, but added: "The problem with Chechnya is that it has been difficult to get in means and equipment, precisely because there has been an ongoing war there."³⁰⁸

NEW AND IMPROVED RUSSIA

The Norwegian authorities seemed consoled by the resistance within the Russian society towards the war in Chechnya. They saw in these democratic forces at work, and seemingly the resistance would put an end to the war. The Russian leaders also gave the impression that the war would be short. In March 1995, an attempt was also made to bring the conflict to a *cease-fire*, but it was fruitless.³⁰⁹

The warfare continued with Russian progress and international pragmatic blessings, but also with more brutality. Word came out that Russian troops had committed massacres in the villages they went into. The most infamous episode was in the village of Samashki on 7 April 1995, where over a hundred civilians were killed and had their houses and barns burnt to the ground by Russian soldiers.³¹⁰ News about the character of the war, and the harsh Russian methods reached Western governments, and Western media. The protests within Russian society against the warfare in Chechnya had so far not led forth. The war was in its fourth month, and still raging. Godal claimed that it was to a high degree uncertain if the parties in the conflict *wanted* a political solution. He claimed that it was of greatest importance that Norway used its bilateral contacts to pressurize Russia on the matter and that Norway would stand as central support to peace-initiatives by international organizations like the OSCE.³¹¹ A discrepancy between words and deeds was appearing:

"All efforts have to be made to make sure that the Chechen conflict isn't allowed to become a threat to the democratic reform process in Russia."³¹² What did Godal mean by "all efforts"? In the particular situation Godal thought it best not to isolate Russia because of the conflict, but rather maintain political dialogue and use that to present Norway's point of view, namely that of promoting a truce and negotiations for a non-violent political solution. In the name of political stability, it was in everyone's favour that Russia continued the political and

³⁰⁸ Oral Question Hour in the Parliament, question no. 3, 19 January 2000.

³⁰⁹ Gall and Waal 1998: 223.

³¹⁰ Gall and Waal 1998: 242-243; Lieven 1998: 130.

³¹¹ St. tid. pp. 2005-2079 (1994-1995): 2041.

³¹² Ibid.

economic reforms with economical support from the Western governments.³¹³ Godal's statements were in accordance with what his State Secretary Bjerke expressed in January. "Norway has great interest in furthering the economical and political reform process in Russia, and want Russia as an active partner", Bjerke said in an open meeting about Chechnya initiated by the Refugee Council. She continued by saying that Norway was going to pressurize Russia, but that it would not be possible to go beyond the scopes of international organizations.³¹⁴ What did Bjerke mean by pressure? Bjerke presumably meant verbal criticism, and mostly within international organizations. Norway was not going to take any sanctioning action against Russia alone.

What can be deduced from Godal's declaration of efforts? By what Godal continued to allege and express, it seems as if the main threat to the Russian democracy was not violation of human rights in Chechnya. It seems that Godal perceived withdrawal of political support and economic aid to Yeltsin's democratic reforms as more threatening. The development in the civil society in Russia gives the opposite impression. The consequent support of Yeltsin says something about the perception of the situation at the time. Western governments believed they would strain a democratic political development by criticizing undemocratic actions performed by their democratic light-carrier Yeltsin. Professor Daniel Heradstveit at NUPI told *Aftenposten* that: "Western cynicism will turn out to be misfortunate *realpolitik* because it will not stabilize Russia, which is the West's intention".³¹⁵ Heradstveit may retrospectively have been correct in his analysis. Western governments thought they were supporting a democratic movement. They did not want to sanction Russia for the invasion of Chechnya and the human rights violation in fear of disturbing this positive process. In practice Western governments ended up supporting undemocratic developments. This is however the wisdom of the present looking down its nose on the past.

Human rights expert, Asbjørn Eide however, agreed with the Norwegian government's policy. He said that it was difficult to proceed with any different policy in the Chechen case. There was no doubt that Russia was violating human rights through infringements of the civilians and terrorizing the population. In this way Russia was violating its responsibility in OSCE, Eide underscored. Eide thought the most important thing Norway could do was support democratic efforts and movements in Russia, not least through informal channels and

³¹³ St. tid. pp. 2005-2079 (1994-1995): 2041.

³¹⁴ «Kritisk for sivile i Tsjetsjenia», *Aftenposten*, 31.1.1995.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

an active but silent diplomacy.³¹⁶ Again, Eide's statements showed how broadly based the perception of value diplomacy as an effective means to fight undemocratic ideas and conduct was at the time. One such channel where promotion of constructive ideas could be served was the newly established Euro-Arctic Barents Sea Region.

The overall target for the government's Barents initiative was in Godal's words of a broad security political character.³¹⁷ To establish a stabilizing pattern of cooperation between Russia and the Nordic countries had been the main strategic goal of the Barents co-operation. The Euro-Arctic Barents Region, commencing its third year of existence early January 1995, was presented as a Norwegian contribution to integrate Russia into European cooperation.³¹⁸ The second main aim was to strengthen the economical and social development in the Barents Sea region itself, and between Russia and Norway. The Barents Region had become a crucial part of Norway's relations with Russia, and through it a vital tool to improve relations.³¹⁹

In the scope of Russia making a brand new effort to be democratic and European, Yeltsin, consequently, needed a victorious end to a war that was becoming increasingly embarrassing and politically burdensome both within the Russian Federation, and in relation with the Western governments and other international institutions. This came to the fore as the celebration of the peace 50th peace anniversary for the Second World War moved closer in time. The celebration was taking place in Russia and was hosted by President Yeltsin.³²⁰

PEACE ANNIVERSARY WITH THE CHECHEN CONFLICT AS BACKDROP

On 9 May 1995, Norway's Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland met one international politician after the other during the commemoration of the end of the Second World War. The prime minister was reportedly satisfied with the meeting with her Russian colleague Victor Tsjernomyrdin. Prime Minister Brundtland told the press that she had made it perfectly clear to him that Norway reacted strongly against what was happening in the Chechen war.³²¹ As a silent and symbolic protest against the war in Chechnya, none of the Western leaders were present during the military parade on the Poklonnaja-hill.³²² "The Russian leadership did not

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Statement to the Parliament on the Barents cooperation by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal, 24.4.1995, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/regjeringen-brundtland-iii/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/1995/statement_to_the_storting_on_the.html?id=261376 (13.5.2010)

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ «Gro i miljø-samtale med Tsjernomyrdin» [Gro in environment-conversation with Tsjernomyrdin], *NTB*, 9.5.1995.

³²¹ «Gro i miljø-samtale med Tsjernomyrdin» *NTB*, 9.5.1995.

³²² Ibid.

question the minimal participation of the World Community in the settlement of the conflict; in turn, the latter did not expect to achieve much.”³²³

Peace negotiations in the Russo-Chechen war was brought on by a large Chechen hostage operation barely a month after the peace anniversary. Chechen field commander Shamil Basaev's birth town, and stronghold of the separatist movement, Vedeno, had fallen after a Russian air raid. 11 members of Basaev's family were reportedly killed, including one of his wives and two of his children. Seemingly as a result Basaev took 30 of his men into Russian territory on 14 June 1995, notifying neither the Chechen President Dudaev, nor his senior commander Aslan Maskhadov.³²⁴ In the Russian city of Budennovsk he launched a mass hostage taking, a huge operation involving approximately 1200 hostages. The goal was to pressure the Kremlin to negotiate. The situation turned into a *passé* once more, and a cease-fire was established. The peace-efforts made by both sides seemed to settle things into order, for a while.³²⁵ By the end of 1995 heavy fighting re-erupted.³²⁶

While Norway and other Western governments verbally exclaimed their abhorrence over the Russian conduct, attempting the sphere of influence, battles between Russian troops and Chechen insurgents continued to be fought. The civilians of Chechnya were caught in the midst.

³²³ Cherkasov and Grushkin 2005: 133.

³²⁴ Lieven 1998: 33; Hughes 2007: 100.

³²⁵ Hughes 2007: 86.

³²⁶ Wagnsson 2000: 140.

4: NORWEGIAN POLICY TOWARDS THE FIRST CHECHEN WAR

A second large Chechen hostage operation in Russia transpired on 6 January 1996. Receiving massive attention in international media, the operation became a reminder to the Kremlin and the Western governments of an ongoing war. “Norway is strongly against the utilization of hostages in the Chechen conflict”, said Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal when asked to comment on the hostage situation 15 January.³²⁷ However, he did not want to comment any further due to lack of information on the situation. His only source of information had so far been CNN. Godal ended the press conference by encouraging “the parties to refrain the use of violence”.³²⁸

The sitting Labour government had expressed its antipathy, and protested, towards the Russian warfare in Chechnya throughout 1995, in line with many other Western governments. The government had not followed its condemning rhetoric with measures of economic or political sanctions, or otherwise. Besides encouraging Russia to refrain from violence – what was Norway’s policy towards the first Russo-Chechen War? In terms of room of manoeuvre – what diplomatic, political, and economic means did Norway have to affect the situation in Chechnya? What could Norway do, and what did they want to do?

JANUARY 1996

In a peaceful part of Europe heated discussions were taking place: A debate on whether to accept or reject Russian membership in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg was the cause of the fuss among the member states.³²⁹ The continued Russian warfare in Chechnya was seen by many in Norway, and other member-countries, as the main objection to Russian membership in the Council.³³⁰ The subject had already been discussed over several years, and Russia’s application had previously been rejected.³³¹ In Norway there were clear disagreements on this question between the Labour government, who was positive, and oppositional political parties in the Parliament.³³²

³²⁷ «Godal: Nei til gisler i Tsjetsjenia-konflikten» [Godal: No to hostages in the Chechen conflict], *NTB*, 15.1.1996.

³²⁸ «Godal: Nei til gisler i Tsjetsjenia-konflikten *NTB*, 15.1.1996.

³²⁹ From here on:” the Council.”

³³⁰ «Europeisk rullett» [European Roulette], *Bergens Tidende*, 23.1.1996.

³³¹ «Europeisk rullett», *Bergens Tidende*, 23.1.1996.

³³² «Norge støtter Russisk medlemskap i Europarådet» [Norway support Russian membership in the Council of Europe], *NTB*, 31.1.1996.

That the Chechen insurgents were by no means neutralized and the war was not over had become clear when Chechen commander Salman Raduyev launched the “lone wolf” operation on 6 January 1996.³³³ He was seemingly copying Shamil Basaev’s large operation in Budennovsk. Near the Dagestani border town Kizlyar in Pervomayskoye district, Raduyev’s unit had assaulted a federal military helicopter airfield. The armed group destroyed two out of three helicopters and killed about thirty people in the attack. Raduyev then led his unit into the town itself and reportedly took between 2000 and 3400 inhabitants hostage in the town hospital buildings. After a few hours they released all but 120 of the hostages and headed towards the Chechen border in buses. The federal forces attacked the bus convoy by air artillery, and the Chechen fighters sought shelter in the nearby Dagestani village, Pervomayskoye. For eight days Chechen insurgents and Russian forces fought and by the time the Chechens escaped, the small town was completely in ruins. There were several losses on both armed sides, and many civilians were killed in the rumble.³³⁴

In the following six months, there was no Russo-Chechen refrain from use of violence. Instead, the war raged at its most volatile throughout the first six month of 1996, until a peace agreement was reached in July 1996.³³⁵ At the same point in time, about 600 000 people reportedly voted with their feet against the conditions in Chechnya. Almost 200 000 ethnic Chechens were internally displaced (IDPs), and both ethnic Russians and Chechens were fleeing over the border to the neighbouring republics, seeking shelter from the storm.³³⁶

PROMOTING RUSSIAN MEMBERSHIP – A DEMONSTRATION OF NORWEGIAN CONSENSUS ORIENTED FOREIGN POLICY

The Norwegian Labour government followed the same course as the preceding year, when it supported Russian membership in the Council of Europe in January 1996. The Labour government had its mind set on voting in favour of Russian membership and was supported by the Liberal party of Norway. The Norwegian Progress and Conservative Party, however, were against accepting Russia as member, as long as the Chechen war prolonged. The Conservatives though, did not want the parliament to instruct the government on this matter,

³³³ Words always have different connotations attached; I have tried to choose as neutral words about the actors in the conflict as possible.

³³⁴ «Trusler og harde krav i tsjetsjensk gisseldrama» [Threats and tough demands in Chechen hostage drama], *NTB*, 9.1.1996; «Gislene løslatt i morges» [Hostages released this morning], *VG*, 10.1.1996; *Evangelista* 2002: 41.

³³⁵ «Kan ikke være verre i helvete» [Cannot be worse in Hell], *VG*, 24.3.1996; «Jeltsin gjorde henne til enke» [Yeltsin made her a widow], *Dagbladet*, 23.3.1996; Wagnsson 2000: 76.

³³⁶ «14 000 på flukt fra Tsjetsjenia» [14 000 fleeing from Chechnya], *NTB*, 2.1.1996; «600 000 flyktninger etter Tsjetsjenia-krig» [600 000 refugees after Chechen war], *NTB*, 4.1.1996.

and therefore voted against a proposition by the Progress Party, intended to deny the government to vote in favour of Russian membership.³³⁷

The Russo-Chechen conflict did not only stir the surface of Russo-Norwegian relations. The conflict raised fundamental questions of human rights and a discussion of what distinguished internal conflict from other conflicts. As the 1990s saw an “explosion” of ethnic conflicts inside sovereign nation states, these questions concerned many Norwegian politicians in general, and were openly discussed in Parliament. Did Parliament influence how the Norwegian government treated the Russo-Chechen conflict in this first period? The question is posed to see if domestic pressure was put on the government and to analyze the situation in a domestic perspective. Due to the level of brutality, the conflict came to be mentioned and discussed several times in open parliamentary sessions. At this time it is not possible to investigate if the situation in Chechnya was on the agenda of the Extended Committee of Foreign Affairs.³³⁸

The necessity for Norway as a small state to have a reining national consensus on foreign affairs has been generally agreed upon since Norway was granted independence in 1905.³³⁹ Among the Norwegian political parties there has, in addition, traditionally been little foreign political interest. Two foreign political subjects have been the source of much debate and political disagreement: NATO and the EU. The consensus tradition was seen as especially important throughout the Cold War when Norwegian security policy was firmly placed within NATO and based on close cooperation with Washington. A political split has been apparent in what the diverging political parties considered important. The left-wing parties were usually more concerned with humanitarian aid and global peace efforts, whereas the Conservatives and the dominant Labour party were, roughly speaking, more concerned with state security, geopolitics and economy. The compromise between the political left and right had formerly been to put as much effort into the UN, as they did in NATO. That policy was maintained through the 1990s.³⁴⁰

The general consensus was not disrupted by the Russo-Chechen conflict. Little effort was in reality made by Parliament to make the government do anything radical or front a different policy towards the conflict. The Russo-Chechen conflict was discussed in parliament, and some of the parties expressed themselves as being disappointed by the way

³³⁷ «Norge støtter russisk medlemskap i Europarådet», *NTB*, 31.1.1996.

³³⁸ It is not in writing moment possible to check if the conflict situation was discussed in the Extended Committee of Foreign Affairs.

³³⁹ Eriksen og Pharo 1997: 18.

³⁴⁰ Janne Haaland Matlary and Audun Halvorsen, i Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann og Ole Jacob Sending, 2006: 193.

the government handled it. However, the debates mostly functioned as a forum where the conflict could be discussed and agreed upon. It could also be considered a “test ground” for the government to see how much the Russo-Chechen conflict engaged public opinion and how much money for humanitarian aid it should allocate. In early 1995 a strong cross-party stance in parliament had expressed that the Norwegian government had to follow a sharper tone in its condemnation of Russia’s abuses in Chechnya.³⁴¹

The Centre Party, prior to the parliament debate, had in 1995 been the only Norwegian political party that had criticized the government publicly on its response to the Chechen conflict. In Norwegian newspapers the Centre Party demanded a tougher approach towards Russia. The party had also written a letter to the Norwegian MFA in an effort to encourage a more direct criticism towards Russia on the matter. The Centre Party stated that Norway should bring the issue to the OSCE. Although Godal had been positive about bringing the case to the OSCE, he had not taken the initiative for Norway to do this. The Centre Party thought that Bjørn Tore Godal had been too careful in his statements regarding the Russian military invasion and were sceptical to his definition of the conflict as an internal Russian affair. The Central party’s concern may have been deep felt, but it was also an opportunity to promote itself as more concerned with human rights than the government, thus creating goodwill in domestic politics. This can in many ways be considered as an oppositional attack on the sitting government. The chance to alter what the opposition had viewed as a too soft policy by Labour towards Russia, came little over a year later, when three of the oppositional parties in the Parliament formed a new government.

RUSSIA AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In Europe it was widely believed that Russian membership in the Council of Europe would enhance security and stability in Europe, but also strengthen the democratic forces at work within Russia. This was the main argument on the “pro-side”. This way of perceiving the situation was also why not only the Government, but also the majority of the Norwegian Parliament ended up supporting Russian membership.³⁴² Bjørn Tore Godal confirmed this explicitly when he said that the MFA “felt that through [Russian] membership in the

³⁴¹ «Fordømmelse av Russland» [Condemnations of Russia], *Aftenposten*, 1.2.1995.

³⁴² «Norge støtter russisk medlemskap i Europarådet», *NTB*, 31.1.1996; «Forhastet» [Rushed], *Aftenposten*, 24.1.1996; «Velkommen Jeltsin» [Welcome, Yeltsin], *Dagbladet* 1.2.1996.

European Council Norway got an additional structure, which the Russians had to relate to and that could be a natural place to discuss basic questions.”³⁴³

James Hughes, Professor of Comparative Politics, claims that with regard to Europe and Russia, two “prominent opportunities for the use of some form influence or conditionality” on the Chechen situation occurred in the mid-nineties. They were both in turn neglected.³⁴⁴ The first one came precisely when Russia applied to join the Council of Europe in 1995. The application was initially suspended due to the war in Chechnya.³⁴⁵ The Council had not stopped evaluating Russia’s application, although Russian membership had been postponed. During the meeting of the Council’s Political Committee in Copenhagen in December 1995, an updated and critical report on Russian membership had been put forth. Nonetheless, German, French, and other Western European leaders, one after another, publicly endorsed Russian membership.³⁴⁶

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council commenced the final debate as to whether Russia should become member of the Council. The debate resulted in a plenary vote the following Thursday. The result had been expected to be the 2/3 in favour that was needed to welcome Russian membership. However, doubts had been raised during the discussion after the last hostage incident in Chechnya. Acceptance of Russian membership had been fairly clear prior to the “lone wolf operation” and the Russo-Chechen showdown in Pervomayskoye. The Kremlin received a hasty visit from the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Daniel Tarschys. The visit had the sole mission of discussing further procedures in light of the development in Chechnya with the Russian leaders.³⁴⁷

The leading politicians in the Kremlin, consulted by Tarschys, however, were of the opinion that they shouldn’t afflict Russia with another prestigious defeat. The matter had already been suspended a year before, due to the armed conflict in Chechnya.³⁴⁸ It had also been commented, or threatened, that a negative outcome in the Russian membership matter would be perceived as indirect support to those who wanted to solve the Russo-Chechen conflict with inhuman methods and terror.³⁴⁹

³⁴³ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009.

³⁴⁴ Hughes, 1997: 131.

³⁴⁵ What Hughes sees as the second opportunity, (which, against the chronology, is already discussed in chapter 3), arose when the “EU and Russia negotiated the primarily economic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in the mid 90s.” Though, as discussed below, the opportunities were neglected.

³⁴⁶ «Europeisk rullett», *Bergens Tidende*, 23.1.1996.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ «Europeisk rullett», *Bergens Tidende*, 23.1.1996.

³⁴⁹ «Solid ja til Russland i Europarådet» [Solid yes to Russia in the Council of Europe], *NTB*, 25.1.1996.

Russia was elected into the Council of Europe as the 39th member on 25 January 1996 by 165 parliament votes against 35. Another 15 had withheld their vote.³⁵⁰ Russia was included on the terms that the Russian actions in Chechnya were attuned with their international obligations, and treaties of the Council.³⁵¹ Boris Yeltsin and Western European governments had just prior to the voting made a real effort of lobbying in the halls and corridors of the Council of Europe. Yeltsin himself was very proud of the achievement and took much credit for having achieved Russian membership. Yeltsin's Russia was given *one* year to ratify and sign the ruling conventions on human rights, protection of minorities and forbid *and* put a stop to the use of torture.³⁵² In contrast, the oil wealthy Azerbaijan with numerous Western oil investors, including Norwegian Statoil, was not accepted as a member until 2000. The main reason was all along the unresolved dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.³⁵³

The Western European governments saw Russia's membership as a victory and support for the pro-western forces in Russia. However, not everyone agreed with Yeltsin and his supporters in the Western European governments. The Russian human rights activist Sergei Kovaljov appealed to the Council of Europe not to open up for Russian membership unless the Council insist that Russia respect human rights and follow the political situation in Russia very carefully. Others critical to Russian membership pointed to the fact that the Council's own Commission of Human Rights (ECHR) had stated that Russia could not be considered a legal state and did not fulfil the membership criteria.³⁵⁴ Hallgrim Berg, of the Norwegian Conservative party, and the Swiss Christian-democrat Dumeni Columberg, voted against Russian membership. They felt that the Council's legitimacy was weakened, because they did not consider Russia as a constitutional democratic state.³⁵⁵ On the other side the Socialists, Christian-Democrats and Liberals in the Parliament acclaimed Russia's improvement in areas of democracy, especially regarding liberty of speech and free media.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁰ «Solid ja til Russland i Europarådet», *NTB*, 25.1.1996.

³⁵¹ Hughes 1997: 131.

³⁵² «Solid ja til Russland i Europarådet», *NTB*, 25.1.1996.

³⁵³ «Aserbajdsjan ønsker nye norske investeringer velkommen» [Azerbaijan welcomes new Norwegian investments], *NTB*, 23.2.2000.

³⁵⁴ «Solid ja til Russland i Europarådet», *NTB*, 25.1.1996.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

DISAPPOINTING RUSSIA – A DEMOCRACY MISCARRIED?

It seems as if the Norwegian government in 1996 still, more or less, perceived Russia as something that was daily becoming more European, as did many other Western leaders. This again seems to have affected how Norway related to the Russo-Chechen conflict. With the wisdom of hindsight it can seem as if the Norwegian government, as well as other Western governments, had some misperceptions about Yeltsin and the new Russian democracy.³⁵⁷ In most public statements Labour government officials spoke positively of Yeltsin and his newly democratic Russia. Foreign minister Godal said he felt he had very good contact with his colleague Kosyrev, and Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, as I will show below, wrote something of a tribute to Boris Yeltsin after his visit in Norway.³⁵⁸

In the mid-1990s, however, the perception of Russia's leadership did seem to change slightly in Norway. From being overly enthusiastic about Yeltsin and his reforms, more scepticism crept into the public discussions on Russia. Many commentators and politicians in Norway saw a new course of a more nationalist turn in Russia that the surrounding world had to deal with from that point on.³⁵⁹ Professor of Political Science has described what he has called the "misery discourse" of how Russia was portrayed in Norway increasingly from the mid-1990s. Norwegian reporters delivered news about poverty in Russia, alcohol problems, the nuclear waste problems in the high north, and the Russian prostitutes and organized crime crossing the border over to Norway in the north. In contrast, they presented Norway as the sound and helpful neighbour that provided advice and aid to the "poor giant".³⁶⁰

State Secretary Åslaug Haga, of the Bondevik I government, confirmed this image of Russia painted in dark colours, almost astonishingly accordantly. When addressing an assembly at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, in Washington on 19 October 1998 she gave focus to the "alarming state of nuclear safety in north-western Russia", and problems "typical of present-Russia, such as corruption, organised crime, official inertia, and a breakdown of political, economic and social networks. She told the American audience that some of this "social confusion" was already spilling over into Norway. Among them "busloads of Russians

³⁵⁷ Lieven 1998: 243.

³⁵⁸ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009.

³⁵⁹ «Uformelle strukturer har makten i Russland» [Informal structures has taken power in Russia], *NTB*, 13.1.1995; «Jeltsin følger ny kurs» [Yeltsin follows new course], *Aftenposten*, 11.1.1996; «Forsvarsminister Kosmo urolig: Jeltsin kan ha tapt kontrollen», *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995; «Delte meninger om Jeltsins form» [Diverging opinions on Yeltsin's condition], *Aftenposten*, 17.7.1996; «Russland nye ansikt» [Russia's new face], *Dagens Næringsliv*, 14.1.1996; «Godals russiske motparter ryker» [Godal's adversaries are fired], *Dagens Næringsliv*, 22.8.1996; Torunn Laugen, «Mot et kaldere klima? Utviklingen av det bilaterale forholdet mellom Norge og Russland på 1990-tallet», *Internasjonal politikk*, 59, 1, 2001: 92.

³⁶⁰ Hønneland, 2005:108-111.

on tourist visas including Russian woman who prostituted themselves for lack of other income, smugglers of Russian vodka and cigarettes, and I am afraid sometimes even people, guns and drugs.”³⁶¹ She said she did not want to be too pessimistic, but that Russia was still sinking deeper into crisis. However, the Russian society had shown itself resistant to crisis.³⁶²

Changes also took place on the Russian political scene. Most of Yeltsin’s “family” had, naturally enough, had their careers within the Soviet Communist Party. It was the same Russians that woke up on the morning of 26 December 1991, although the Soviet flag had been raised for the last time the day before.³⁶³ Nonetheless, during Yeltsin’s first period, the process of completely reforming the main structures of society was commenced. Russia was rapidly transformed into an open economy with decentralized political structures, except for the highest federal level. Although these changes were real and evident enough, there were all the time conservative forces wanting to return to a communist regime, and a less Westernized course. This divergence in the broader debate on Russian foreign policy was at this time split in two main ideological blocks: the pro-western liberals, called the internationalists or atlantists; and the nationalists or the neo-patriots.³⁶⁴

The turn away had accelerated since 1993, when what has been called a “honeymoon” period in Russian foreign policy thinking on the West.³⁶⁵ This became more apparent when Godal’s friendly counterpart, the atlantist Andrej Kosyrev, left the Yeltsin government, along with five other ministers, after the Russian parliamentary election 17 December 1995. It seemed as if Kosyrev left by own will, but he had the preceding year received several political blows, some dealt to him by President Yeltsin himself, and others by opponents of a more nationalist conviction. He was replaced by Jevgenij Primakov.³⁶⁶ The 66 year old Primakov had until this appointment been leader of the Russian Federal Foreign Intelligence Service (FSB).³⁶⁷ Primakov was not as interested in the Barents Sea or other projects underpinned in the West as his predecessor had been.

Foreign Minister Vollebæk, who succeeded Godal in 1997, regarded the perception of Russia and Yeltsin at the time retrospectively in an interview. He recalled that the Norwegian

³⁶¹ Statement to the Carnegie Endowment for Peace on «Norway and Russia- a northern connection», by State Secretary Åslaug Haga, *UD informasjon* 1998, 25: 39.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Blakkisrud, 2009: 209.

³⁶⁴ Wagnsson 2000: 76.

³⁶⁵ Ibid: 79.

³⁶⁶ «Primakov ny utenriksminister i Russland» [Primakov new foreign minister of Russia], *NTB*, 9.1.1996; «Jeltsin følger ny kurs», *Aftenposten*, 11.1.1996; «Lenin på en sokkel» [Lenin on a pedestal], *Nordlys*, 24.1.1996.

³⁶⁷ «Primakov ny utenriksminister i Russland», *NTB*, 9.1.1996.

government had not naïve in its perception of Yeltsin, although Yeltsin had been viewed as a positive force that opened up the Russian society and someone who made it possible for the common man in the street to be more politically involved.³⁶⁸

However he recognized that there had occurred a change between the first Yeltsin period around 1991 and the period where Vollebæk was in government. In 1991 bilateral relations with Russia had seen a wholly different dynamic. During the first years there was considered to be more possibilities for influence, cooperation and interaction in the northern areas. In the mid-1990s it changed with the appointment of Primakov and others. The process of democratization staggered in the mid-1990s and Yeltsin's connection with former allied reformers were broken.³⁶⁹ The Norwegian government had worried about the development, but all along there had been hopes of further improvement despite the setbacks. The invasion of Chechnya had been seen as a warning-signal. It was perceived in Norway, according to Vollebæk, as a dilemma of how to support the positive tendencies in Russia without compromising on important ideals and values. The government saw the Russian democratic development as a course in the right direction, if not a course in a straight line. The discovery of Russian intelligence officers attempting to recruit Norwegian spies in Norway, and other spy-affairs came as a huge surprise to the Norwegian government, who thought that those days had ended with the end of the Cold War.³⁷⁰

Criticism against authoritarian tendencies came increasingly also forth from within Russian society.³⁷¹ The Russian Bellona co-worker Alexandr Nikitin was arrested in January 1996 on grounds of uncertain charges. Human rights activist Kovaljov thought that Norway should get engaged with the matter on behalf of Nikitin. Kovaljov was in Norway to accept the Helsingfors Committee's Sakharov Award for his work with peace efforts and human rights in Chechnya. Norwegian interests were also touched by this matter, because Norwegian environmental workers in Bellona had indirectly been accused of espionage.³⁷²

Kovaljov encouraged Foreign Minister Godal to talk to Primakov about Nikitin's legal security during his visit in Moscow. Kovaljov met with State Secretary Siri Bjerke and the

³⁶⁸ Phone Interview with Vollebæk, 17.2.2010.

³⁶⁹ Geir Flikke, «Gorbachev and Yeltsin as leaders» and «Russia's stillborn democracy? From Gorbachev to Yeltsin», *Internasjonal Politikk* 2002, 3: 374.

³⁷⁰ Phone-interview with Vollebæk, 17.2.2010; «Full støtte til regjeringen i utvisningsaken» [Full support to the government on the extradition affair], *NTB*, 12.3.1998; «Spionene: Krangel ved ambassaden» [The Spies: Quarrel by the embassy], *Dagbladet*, 13.3.1998.

³⁷¹ «Kovaljov», *Aftenposten*, 20.2.1996.

³⁷² «Menneskerettsveteran: -forsøk på justismord på Nikitin» [Human rights veteran: attempted judicial murder], *NTB*, 19.2.1996.

Parliament's committee of foreign affairs during his stay.³⁷³ The 65 year old man had recently resigned from the chairman position of the President's human rights committee. For the occasion he had sent a very critical letter to the President with an account of what he considered an unfortunate development.³⁷⁴ When Godal had his first meeting with his new colleague, foreign minister Jevgenij Primakov, in Moscow 2 March 1996, he mentioned Nikitin and his case. Reportedly, they then discussed NATO, but did not bring up Chechnya at all.³⁷⁵ At the end of this introductory meeting Primakov announced that President Yeltsin was "finally" visiting Norway.³⁷⁶

PRESIDENT YELTSIN'S VISIT TO NORWAY

On 25 March 1996 Yeltsin landed on Norwegian soil where he was received by the Norwegian Crown Princess Martha Louise. The main assertion as to why Yeltsin chose to visit Norway was that a "Norway-visit" would most likely be a positive contribution to his election campaign at the time. The Russian president had already suspended his Norway-visit twice, due to ill health.³⁷⁷ He had also had a series of unfortunate public performances, where he among incidents "overslept" to a meeting with the President of Ireland. In general he often seemed drunk and unstable whenever he appeared.³⁷⁸ Yeltsin was in his final phase of the Russian Presidential election campaign and he needed goodwill. The election date was set for June, only months away, and his reasons for visiting Norway was therefore thoroughly discussed in Russian and Norwegian media.³⁷⁹ Norway and Russia had some issues to work out. Nevertheless, it was reckoned to be a nice event to be received by the King and Queen of Norway and to discuss, for instance, how well the cooperation in the Barents Sea was going. In other words, it would give Yeltsin a convenient chance to show himself and his government off to the Russian voters from the best possible side.³⁸⁰

A few days before Yeltsin's arrival there were many speculations on what the Russian President wanted to discuss. Spokesman for the Prime Minister told the media that if Yeltsin should choose a tough approach, he would receive the answers that were needed, already

³⁷³ «Menneskerettsveteran: -forsøk på justismord på Nikitin», *NTB*, 19.2.1996.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ «Avslappet møte i Moskva» [Relaxed meeting in Moscow], *NTB*, 2.3.1996; «Russisk kritikk dempes» [Russian criticism is subdued], *Aftenposten* 3.3.1996.

³⁷⁶ «Tsjetsjenia-konflikten tveegget sverd for Jeltsin» [Chechnya conflict is a double-edged sword to Yeltsin], *Aftenposten*, 18.1.96; «Boris, Boris», *Nordlys*, 1.3.96.

³⁷⁷ «Boris kommer» [Boris is coming], *Nordlys*, 22.3.96.

³⁷⁸ «Jeltsin en folkevalgt Tsar» [Yeltsin a chosen Tsar], *NTB*, 31.12.1999.

³⁷⁹ «Tsjetsjenia-konflikten tveegget sverd for Jeltsin», *Aftenposten*, 18.1.96.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

explained to Russia by NATO's Secretary General Javier Solanas, and US Foreign Minister Warren Christopher.³⁸¹ The Prime Minister expressed by this comment that Norway was firmly within the alliance with NATO and the US, and would provide the same answers as Solana and Christopher. The first "talks" between Yeltsin and Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland were to take place under "four eyes only", except for the interpreters and referents. There were also going to be talks between Foreign Minister Godal and Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs and their counterparts. The Norwegian Prime Minister, the spokesman said, would be likely to mention the Chechen war, though the Prime Minister's advisors thought that a "soft" approach towards Yeltsin was important. The Norwegian government was going to pay attention to Yeltsin's "tone-of-voice in the conversations", not least when it came to international matters.³⁸² This strategy of precaution clearly shows that Norway did not want to step on Yeltsin's toes during the visit.

For Norway, Yeltsin's visit was an important opportunity to further dialogue with its great neighbour. The Norwegian government seemingly wanted the visit to run as smoothly as possible. If Yeltsin did not want to discuss Chechnya, inquiries about human rights, seemingly, were not going to ruin the good atmosphere. Yeltsin's "tone-of-voice" was composed and friendly during his entire stay and this facilitated conversation on most areas. Next to the question of the nuclear facilities on the Kola Peninsula, most of the time had gone by discussing the bilateral marine delimitation between the continental shelves and the economical zones in the Barents Sea. The Prime Minister, according to "centrally placed sources", had brought forth a map, whereon she drew and described and explained to her Russian guest, how and why the remaining issue could and should be solved.³⁸³ Earlier on, the Russians had wanted to make the disputed area into a common area. It had become confirmed that Norway and Russia really needed a defined border. While negotiating the border line, they also wanted to discuss how they could cooperate on the petroleum resources that were expected to exist in the area.³⁸⁴

Four agreements were reached and signed during Yeltsin's stay in Norway. The first agreement was a 14 pages very general common statement on the status of the relationship, expressing common desires to develop it further. A second agreement on common taxes was achieved and a third agreement on trade and economical cooperation, and a fourth protocol on

³⁸¹ «Viktige tosidige spørsmål under samtale Gro-Jeltsin» [Important bilateral questions in the Gro-Yeltsin conversations], *NTB*, 22.3.1996

³⁸² «Viktige tosidige spørsmål under samtale Gro-Jeltsin», *NTB*, 22.3.1996

³⁸³ «Jeltsin i Norge: Delelinjen kan falle på plass» [Yeltsin in Norway: the delimitation can be sorted out], *Aftenposten*, 27.3.1996

³⁸⁴ «Jeltsin i Norge: Delelinjen kan falle på plass», *Aftenposten*, 27.3.1996.

the fulfilments on the Petsjenga-Nikel project were also signed. “That was one more agreement signed than expected”, said Prime Minister Brundtland.³⁸⁵

NATO’s plans of enlargement were not formally discussed, although Yeltsin openly criticized the plans in speeches and press conferences during his stay. Only minutes before Yeltsin had left Moscow for Norway, he had warned Norway and NATO of the planned enlargement in an eastern direction.³⁸⁶ As to the Chechen conflict, the Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland had “openly” made clear the concern that reining both in Norway, and throughout the world, about the conflict and the humanitarian situation. Yeltsin responded by telling the Prime Minister about the “peace-speech” he was going to make the upcoming Sunday and that he wanted to try to end the warfare within June the same year.

TO WHAT END?

The Russian media emphasized Yeltsin’s need to make an effort to dissolve the Russian military campaign in Chechnya because of the upcoming election.³⁸⁷ Various polls were conducted in Russia with questions relating to the Russo-Chechen war throughout the first war. The results showed that the war was increasingly unpopular in Russia, and increasingly a burden to Yeltsin’s image as a democratic politician.³⁸⁸ “The peace-process plan launched in April 1996 can therefore be seen as largely driven by the presidential campaign.”³⁸⁹ The Russian President was homewards bound and his visit was very positively referred to in the Russian media the days after his return from Oslo.³⁹⁰ Yeltsin had gained what he sought in Norway.

A week after Yeltsin’s visit, Norway’s Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland had an optimistic op-ed about Russo-Norwegian relations published. “It favours Norway in every possible way if Russia has success with their reforms. Therefore we have to support a positive development, politically and by a strong economical engagement.” In that way, Brundtland thought Norway would have the best chance to affect the development.³⁹¹ Brundtland’s commentary in *Aftenposten* 3 April 1996 was a tribute to the good cooperation with Russia throughout the centuries and to the areas that were functioning well.³⁹²

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ «Jeltsin advarer NATO» [Yeltsin warns NATO], *Nordlys*, 26.3.96

³⁸⁷ «Hjem til skamros» [Home to extravagant praise], *VG*, 27.3.96

³⁸⁸ Wagnsson 2000: 145-183.

³⁸⁹ Hughes 2007: 87, 109; Bowker 2005: 229

³⁹⁰ «Hjem til skamros», *VG*, 27.3.96; «Positiv russisk presseomtale av Jeltsins besøk» [Positive Russian reporting on Yeltsin’s visit], *NTB*, 27.3.96.

³⁹¹ Gro Harlem Brundtland, «Boris Jeltsins Russland» [Boris Yeltsin’s Russia], *Aftenposten*, 3.4.1996.

³⁹² Gro Harlem Brundtland, «Boris Jeltsins Russland», *Aftenposten*, 3.4.1996.

Despite making it clear that Norway could not accept the war in Chechnya, she did not think it would get better in Chechnya if the surrounding world showed their opposition to the war by closing doors or reducing the aid that could contribute to Russia's progress.³⁹³ She stated that it would not help the Chechen people to isolate Russia on areas where Norway and Western countries could help. Her vision was that if the West proceeded in such a rejecting way, Russia would follow its own path and that would not do anyone good. She continued by stating Labour's strategies for the Barents Sea cooperation. Norway was building a framework for new openness, growth and new optimism, she wrote, not least through the Barents sea-cooperation, where Russia was Chairman.³⁹⁴ It is evident from the Prime Minister's comment that she was convinced that Russia was on the right path, and if only the West "showed the right way", it would continue in the right direction.

Gro Harlem Brundtland was indeed selective when she chose her images of the democratic Yeltsin. For instance she described the image of Yeltsin in front of the White House in Moscow, on top of a tank with his megaphone during the coup attempt in September 1991. However, she did not mention when Yeltsin had attacked the Russia parliament with armed forces in 1993.³⁹⁵ She added to her op-ed that the image of the warfare in Chechnya *also* was a strong image that "we cannot accept." It can almost seem as if the Norwegian government regarded President Yeltsin as somewhat of a "good Tsar" who could not be held responsible for the acts of his brutal footmen.

THE LEBED-MASKHADOV PEACE AGREEMENT

On 31 August 1996 the first Russo-Chechen war was officially brought to an end with the signing of the *Khasavyurt ceasefire agreement* also called the *Lebed-Maskhadov peace agreement*.³⁹⁶ Yeltsin and the Kremlin had been serious about ending the armed conflict. Yeltsin was re-elected for a second period, and the peace process plan was on schedule. The negotiations had been facilitated by the head of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya, Tim Guldiman. The group had been established at the 16th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on 11 April, 1995.³⁹⁷ The negotiation process had been led by the Russian general, Security Council Secretary, and newly appointed envoy to Chechnya Alexander Lebed, and the Chechen field commander Aslan Maskhadov. When President Dudaev was killed by a

³⁹³ Gro Harlem Brundtland, «Boris Jeltsins Russland», *Aftenposten*, 3.4.1996.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Lieven 1998: 243.

³⁹⁶ Said 2007: 139-140; Hughes 2007: 209-210.

³⁹⁷ Skagestad 2008: 163.

Russian missile the process sped up.³⁹⁸ The political status of Chechnya was to be decided upon in negotiations within a period of five years. Russian federal troops began to withdraw, although the last troops were not out before the end of 1997. Russian policy towards Chechnya, after this, was characterized mainly by passivity. No serious negotiations on the status of Chechnya, as prescribed in the Khasavyurt agreement, took place, since both sides were stuck in their positions and not open for compromises. Russia chose not to support the relatively moderate Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov, against his more radical challengers.³⁹⁹

BJØRN TORE GODAL'S STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Bjørn Tore Godal's statement to the Parliament on human rights on 10 October 1996 touched upon most troubled areas in the world. Russia was conspicuous in its absence. Firstly, Godal's statement contained brawny proclamations of Norwegian efforts:

Never before have so many people who are imprisoned, persecuted or missing received so much effective assistance from Norwegian diplomats or relief organizations. Never before have we so actively confronted power-seeking leaders with specific violations of human rights and concrete proposals for improvement.⁴⁰⁰

He continued by stating that the active line Norway was pursuing was not without cost. Norway was occasionally the target of serious accusations by regimes that wanted to avoid becoming focal point of Norway's critical attention. His following example was Kenyan authorities. Godal did not provide an example where Norwegian security or national interests was at stake. Godal referred to the UN when he stated that military force to stop a state from violating the rights of its citizens should only be applied if international peace and security was at stake. The international society had a right and a duty to react when states failed to display a minimum of respect to its citizens: "In such cases, the principle of national autonomy must take second place."⁴⁰¹ In the eyes of the Norwegian government, dialogue and incentives were the best way to promote human rights, and this was put to effort in all bilateral relations Norway had.

The government's opinion was that economic sanctions should only be used as "a last resort when other measures have been tried and found wanting."⁴⁰² He argued that the political

³⁹⁸ Wagnsson 2000: 141.

³⁹⁹ Lena Jonson, «Introduction», in Lena Jonson and Murad Esenov (ed.), *Chechnya: The International Community and Strategies for Peace and Stability*, Stockholm 2000: 2.

⁴⁰⁰ Statement to the Parliament on Human Rights by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal 10 October 1996.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

results might be difficult to predict and did not always correspond to the intentions. The government did not view unilateral Norwegian sanctions as an effective means of exerting pressure. The symbolic effect was argued to be stronger in Norway than abroad. It is usually easy for regimes to find substitutes for relations with Norway. It could also have disproportionately severe effects on Norwegian industry and could undermine confidence in Norway as a trading partner.⁴⁰³ Unilateral Norwegian sanctions will seldom, if ever, Godal said, be an effective means of exerting pressure. Norway is small and vulnerable, and the government objected to the idea that countries could boycott another without being authorized by the UN.⁴⁰⁴ Godal was aware that the government was occasionally criticized for being inconsistent in the measures it employed or for using apparently conflicting measures. To this he remarked that the means should always be adapted to the ends, and the overriding objectives should be to always find ways of improving the situation as effectively as possible.⁴⁰⁵

The statement proceeded by leading the Parliament through a couple of cases. China and Indonesia were two regimes where the Norwegian government had chosen to maintain dialogue even though it was concerned with the human rights situation. Norway recognized the social and economic progress that had been made in China and also the great challenges the large society was facing.⁴⁰⁶ By comparison, there were plenty of reasons to criticize human rights violations in Russia in general, and Chechnya in particular. But the Norwegian government chose not to. In fact, Godal did not even mention it. An integral part of the government's commitment to human rights was the concern about the treatment of minorities such as the Kurds and the Tibetans. The situation in Russia had similarities to quite a lot of the cases he mentioned.

Norway could support or perform sanctions against regimes, even if they were not UN based. On request by the leader of the democratic forces in Burma, Aung San Suu Kui, the government supported isolation of the military regime in Burma. This was done through economic sanctions and international censure. Due to the issue of the Fatwa regarding the publication of Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie, Iran was an additional country that in Godal's opinion represented a totally unacceptable violation of the most fundamental norms of international law, which normal relations with could at the time not be maintained.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ Statement to the Parliament on Human Rights by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal 10 October 1996.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Statement to the Parliament on Human Rights by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal 10 October 1996.

On the question of why Russia had been excluded in the statement, Godal has stated that he could not remember. He added to his answer that at times the government could avoid mentioning the state in concern to see that it did not disturb eventual processes at hand. However, he took the precondition that it did not necessarily concern this particular episode. Even though Norway at the time seemingly “had a thing” for secret negotiations, there was nothing to indicate that Norway was involved in the North Caucasus at the time.⁴⁰⁸

Peace processes were at hand in Chechnya at the time. An OSCE mission team had been sent with Norwegian representatives. State Secretary Jan Egeland had a year previously commented to journalists that, due to Norway’s “status” as peace facilitators in the mid 1990s, several requests for mediation were received also from the Caucasus. Egeland concluded his view on the matter by stating that the government had to decline inquiries if they did not meet the requirements for Norwegian engagement. That is, Norway had to be represented in the area preferably on “both sides” of the conflict, there had to be Norwegian expertise on the area available, and “both parties” had to have confidence in Norway.⁴⁰⁹ Norway seemingly did not have any representatives in the North Caucasus that could have established such mediation contacts as they had in Guatemala, for instance. Even if they did, it is by no indication given that they would have involved themselves without Russia’s acceptance.

THE KILLING OF INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS EMPLOYEES IN NOVYE ATAGI

Tragic news reached the Norwegian MFA on the morning of 17 December 1996. Unknown assassins had killed six expatriate employees of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the small Chechen town of Novye Atagi. Among the victims were the two Norwegian nurses – Gunhild Myklebust and Ingebjørg Foss.⁴¹⁰ The ICRC hospital they worked at was financed and provided by the “people of Norway and the Norwegian government as a gift to the Chechen people”.⁴¹¹ It had at first been somewhat of a tug of war with the Russian authorities before Norway was allowed to place it in Chechnya.⁴¹² The violent incident in Novye Atagi caused withdrawal of most Red Cross Workers.⁴¹³

State Secretary Jan Egeland exclaimed that Norway’s government wanted a clear message to reach local and federal authorities in Russia and Chechnya: those responsible for

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009

⁴⁰⁹ «Lille Norge, hva nå?»[Little Norway, What now?], *VG*, 30.1.1995.

⁴¹⁰ The other health-personnel assassinated were Canadian Nancy Malloy, Spanish Fernanda Calado, Johan Joost Elkerbout from Netherlands, and Sheryl Thayer from New Zealand.

⁴¹¹ «To norske skutt i Tsjetsjenia»[Two Norwegian shot in Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 17.12.1996.

⁴¹² «Røde Kors’ sykehus trakassert»[Red Cross hospital harassed], *Aftenposten*, 24.9.1996.

⁴¹³ «Ebbas beste gave»[Ebba’s greatest gift], *VG*, 20.12.1996.

the atrocities had to be captured.⁴¹⁴ He continued by stating that a similar impairment had never struck Norwegian or International aid work before. Spokesman of the MFA, Ingvard Havnen said that this was probably the worst attack on Norwegian aid workers that had ever taken place: “The MFA is shocked by what has happened, and the MFA will provide all possible assistance in regard of it.”⁴¹⁵ Nevertheless, Norway did not want to send police to Chechnya to investigate the murders. They received invitation to participate in the investigation from Chechen spokesmen to the Nordic countries, Usman Fersauli. Ingvard Havnen, spokesman for the Norwegian MFA, said the department had concluded that it would not make much difference and that the MFA trusted that Russian and Chechen authorities did their job.⁴¹⁶

Spokesman Havnen was asked if the episode would have consequences for Norwegian efforts, i.e. the hospital and Norwegian health workers and OSCE observers, in Chechnya, whereby he responded that it was too early to comment on. Havnen claimed that more information was needed. He added that before the incident there had been a general impression, based on observations of the Norwegian MFA and the ICRC, that the security of the ICRC employees had been satisfactory.⁴¹⁷ Aid-worker Terje Engevik, who had been part of the Norwegian Red Cross mission group that decided where the hospital should be placed, supported this as he said that Novye Atagi had been considered completely safe.⁴¹⁸

Nonetheless, the overall security situation in Chechnya had been just as labile to foreigners as it had been to Chechen citizens since the first outbreak of war. Already within a month of the establishment of the hospital, in September 1996, there had taken place a threatening incident at the grounds of the Hospital. Norwegian journalist Kjell Dragnes reported that the guerrilla leader, Basaev's *secundant*, the Saudi al-Khattab, came to the hospital and demanded that the crosses, the emblem of the Red Cross, were taken down. The intruding armed group quarrelled with the elders of the village surrounding the hospital, and the elders had managed to calm down the intruders.⁴¹⁹ The episode ended by a settled compromise where the red crosses, except for the emblem above the main entrance, were painted over with white paint.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁴ «To norske skutt i Tsjetsjenia», *Aftenposten*, 17.12.1996.

⁴¹⁵ «Ikke norsk politi til Tsjetsjenia»[No Norwegian police to Chechnya], *VG*, 27.12.1996.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ «To norske skutt i Tsjetsjenia», *Aftenposten*, 17.12.1996.

⁴¹⁸ «Tragedien i Tsjetsjenia – Vi følte oss trygge» [The tragedy in Chechnya- We felt safe], *Aftenposten*, 18.12.1996.

⁴¹⁹ In the article he is named Hattab, however, everything in the article, indicated that this concerned al-Khattab; «Røde Kors' sykehus trakassert», *Aftenposten*, 24.9.1996.

⁴²⁰ «Røde Kors' sykehus trakassert», *Aftenposten*, 24.9.1996.

The Khasavyurt Peace-Agreement signed in July had not made the situation much better. In contrast to the official peace in Chechnya, episodes like the one that occurred in Novye Atagi showed that it was a fragile hiatus and that armed groups were still ranging the area. In September 1996 Elisabeth Ranheim, a Norwegian nurse at the hospital in Novye Atagi, reported that they received persons with gunshot wounds every single day, although there had been a declaration of peace in the area three months previously.⁴²¹ Aid workers had several times before this media covered incident been threatened and kidnapped in the region. Kidnapping had been a rather frequent phenomenon for some years.⁴²²

A while after the attack on the Red Cross hospital the security situation was regarded too dangerous, and the result was that other humanitarian aid organizations withdrew their people from Chechnya, among them Medicines sans frontières (MSF) and Medicines du Monde.⁴²³ OSCE was the only remaining international organisation represented in Chechnya.⁴²⁴

HUMANITARIAN AID

Humanitarian aid had been a way for Norway and other countries to contribute and provide assistance to the civilians in Chechnya. It had supported the civilian population with a hospital and personnel. The security situation, however, derogated to such a degree, as seen above, that all efforts were withdrawn for a period. By the winter of 1997 the Norwegian government had given NOK 1.5 billion to humanitarian efforts. The main priority areas had been the former Yugoslavia, central Africa, the Palestinian territories, Afghanistan and Sudan. In March 1997 State Secretary Jan Egeland in the MFA, raised doubts about the motives and effects of humanitarian aid in conflict regions.⁴²⁵

Egeland claimed that humanitarian aid had been brought into the centre of international politics in the nineties. This contributed positively to the possibility of organizing operations that in only a few days could rescue hundreds of thousands of people in need. However, he also saw the potential for humanitarian aid to become a pretext for

⁴²¹ «Røde Kors' sykehus trakassert», *Aftenposten*, 24.9.1996.

⁴²² «-det var en ren henrettelse. Sykepleier Ranheim hadde jevnlig kontakt med de to» [It was an execution. Nurse Ranheim were in frequent contact with the two], *Dagbladet*, 18.12.1996; Odd Gunnar Skagestad, «Keeping hope alive: Experiences of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya», in *Yearbook on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*, Baden-Baden 1999: 211-223, <http://www.ogsagestad.info/attachments/File/OSCEYearbook99.pdf> (13.5.2010)

⁴²³ «Natt-sermoni for de drepte»[Night ceremoni for the killed], *Dagbladet*, 19.12.1996.

⁴²⁴ Odd Gunnar Skagestad, «How can the international community contribute to peace and stability in and around Chechnya? A pessimistic reply», in Lena Jonson and Murad Esenov (ed.), *Chechnya: the International Community and Strategies for Peace and Stability*, Stockholm 2000: 126; Hughes 2007: 97.

⁴²⁵ Jan Egeland, «Krig, fred og bistand»[War, Peace and development aid], *Dagbladet*, 26.3.1997.

powerful decision makers in organizations such as OSCE, the UN Security Council, and NATO, to avoid further political involvement in a conflict. If a humanitarian crisis was improved through humanitarian aid, the situation would not “demand” action. This could in turn make the surrounding world leave the situation be, indirectly prolonging the conflict, because the situation would no longer be completely desperate.⁴²⁶

Vollebæk did not agree with Egeland’s overall view on this. He remarked that what Egeland stated, would be the same as abusing money to dodge political engagement. Vollebæk considered it more as a sign of a guilty conscience towards the civilians in those kinds of conflicts. According to Vollebæk the least external organizations or governments could do was to help civilians in warzones, especially when it was not possible to settle the conflict.⁴²⁷ Whether basic humanitarian assistance in Chechnya made the surrounding world’s demands for a peaceful solution less forceful or not remains an open question. The two possibilities here represented by Vollebæk and Egeland were both viable to the situation in Chechnya.

PEACE TREATIES, INDEPENDENCE AND OTHER FRAUDS

The OSCE played an important role in the first Russo-Chechen war. Head of the OSCE Assistance Group Tim Guldman was by many seen to have been instrumental in facilitating the negotiation process that led to the Khasavyurt Agreement. In January 1997 the OSCE was going to supervise what would be the first and last national Presidential and Parliamentary election in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Maskhadov was elected first Chechen president of the Chechen republic of Ichkeria in an election process, which was deemed by the OSCE to be decent and fair. There were some objections to the proceedings due to young men in groups harassing voters at a few places. These hoodlums were often supporters of Basaev, who came in second place to Maskhadov. Maskhadov had broad support as a moderate candidate in a war-weary population.⁴²⁸

The OSCE also assisted in bringing about the Treaty on Peace and Principles of Mutual Relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic, signed by president Yeltsin and Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov in Moscow May 1997. Chechnya’s final status was stated to be settled within 2001 through negotiations. These negotiations did not come about as soon as Maskhadov was expecting. The Chechen president

⁴²⁶ Jan Egeland, «Krig, fred og bistand», *Dagbladet*, 26.3.1997.

⁴²⁷ Phone-interview with Vollebæk, 17.2.2010.

⁴²⁸ Jonson 2000: 6.

was fighting a strenuous battle to maintain authority and received little support, although Sergej Stepasjin commented that “Maskhadov is supported by Russia and other countries and should be able to consolidate his authority”.⁴²⁹ On December 1998, Maskhadov reportedly expressed his “readiness for any dialogue with the Russian government”. Yeltsin however was reported in Russian newspapers to have annulled his directive to negotiate a treaty, along the lines of the treaty with Tatarstan.⁴³⁰ After spring 1997, the prevailing view in the Kremlin was that no third party mediation was necessary.⁴³¹ Russian authorities claimed that the OSCE task had been carried out in full, and by this implicitly stated that there was no need for continued involvement.⁴³² Hawks in the Kremlin and the Russian military have also been blamed for doing everything they could to get revenge on the “Chechen bandits” that “defeated” them.⁴³³

LABOUR OUT

On 17 October 1997 a coalition government took seat in Norway. The Bondevik I government consisted of the Christian democrats, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party. The government was headed by the Christian democrat and protestant priest Kjell Magne Bondevik. It claimed it was more concerned with human rights than its predecessor. The government even had a minister of human rights.⁴³⁴ Filling the position of foreign minister was Knut Vollebæk, a department official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and advisor to former foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg through many years. Three days into his office as foreign minister, Vollebæk was leaving for an official visit to China, prearranged by the former political leadership.

Before the fresh foreign minister left for China, the Bondevik I government loudly announced to the Norwegian press corps that it was much concerned with human rights in China and this would be attended to during conversations with the Chinese leaders.⁴³⁵ Reminiscing the first days in office, Knut Vollebæk made perfectly clear that human rights’ activism was something the new government wanted to be seen as part of its trademark. The

⁴²⁹ Evangelista 2002: 56.

⁴³⁰ Ibid: 56.

⁴³¹ Jonson 2000: 6.

⁴³² Skagestad 2008: 164.

⁴³³ Said 2007: 139.

⁴³⁴ «Menneskerettigheter teller mest» [Human rights counts the most], *Aftenposten*, 21.10.1997.

⁴³⁵ «Vollebæk skal ta opp menneskerettigheter i Kina» [Vollebæk will adress human rights in China], *NTB*, 17.10.1997.

government's representatives therefore deliberately highlighted it at all possible times the first period to establish it as a characteristic feature.⁴³⁶

Did the high human rights-profile that the new government emphasized have implications for the policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict? Recollecting the Bondevik I period, Vollebæk found it hard to see that the Bondevik I government he was part of led a more activist-policy in regards of the conflict, than did the antecedent Labour government.⁴³⁷ As shown in foreign minister Godal's account of Norwegian policy on human rights, China had been on top of the priority list for some time.⁴³⁸ It can thus be seen as a mere effort, or strategy, made by the Bondevik-government to distinguish the new heads of the Norwegian state as more concerned with human rights than the former Labour government, and simply enough, an effort to achieve goodwill on the domestic political scene.

Criticism was early on voiced against the Bondevik I government. Professor Daniel Heradstveit at the Norwegian Institute for Foreign Affairs showed little initial confidence in the fresh Norwegian Prime Minister. He expected that he would confirm the standard "silence" on difficult conflicts that did not engage the media and the general population. He posed the rhetorical question of why Prime Minister Bondevik had chosen to visit Burma and not Algeria. His point was to show that the new government was affected by popular concerns as to what was most important. He claimed that it was a matter of identification, the less the Western society could identify itself with the parts of the conflict, the less concerned were Western people and the less attention was received by the conflicts. Insurgents in Chechnya, Algeria and North Korea had no popular face to front their campaign as compared to Burma's Aung San Suu Kui, the Palestinians' Yasser Arafat and Tibet's Dalai Lama.⁴³⁹

Even though the members of the Bondevik I government had been critical to the Labour government while in opposition, positioned as government it would not make itself distinct with a tougher policy toward Russia than its predecessor. It can in the end be considered foremost to have served a domestic strategy to promote the government's good will.

Compared to other Norwegian political parties the Norwegian Labour Party has had a unique position in Norwegian foreign politics and policy making. In the fifties they could

⁴³⁶ Phone-interview with Knut Vollebæk, 17.2.2010; «Populistisk utenrikspolitikk»[Populistic foreign policy], *Bergens Tidende*, 24.9.1997; «Norsk utenrikspolitikk i støpeskjeen»[Norwegian foreign policy in the making], *Aftenposten*, 29.9.1997

⁴³⁷ Phone-interview with Knut Vollebæk, 17.2.2010

⁴³⁸ Statement to the Parliament on Human Rights by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal 10.10.1996.

⁴³⁹ «Populistisk utenrikspolitikk», *Bergens Tidende*, 24.9.1997.

almost draw out the main lines of Norwegian foreign policy on their own party congresses.⁴⁴⁰ The Labour party has also had tight links with Norwegian political research institutions and has had the largest collection of foreign political experts within their party. However, the consensus tradition of Norwegian foreign policy is well established.⁴⁴¹

Thorvald Stoltenberg, Thorbjørn Jagland and Bjørn Tore Godal are three Norwegian politicians that are distinguished as foreign political veterans. All of them are from the Labour party. All of them were part of outlining Norwegian foreign policy in the nineties.⁴⁴² Foreign minister Bjørn Tore Godal had served as chairman in the work with the “famous” Whitepaper, *“development trends in the international society and their effects on Norwegian foreign policy”*. He thus brought political continuity through his own person as foreign minister in the mid-1990s and as defence minister in 2000-2001.

However, it was not only Godal and the Labour party that brought continuity. Professor of history Terje Tvedt has described what he calls “elite circulation” between Norwegian foreign politicians and heads of the Norwegian NGOs such as Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian People’s Aid and/or Norwegian Church Aid.⁴⁴³ “Over time, a practice has been developed, where a small number of individuals circulate between leading positions in the political sphere and the sphere of the NGOs, in addition, the same persons distributes the systems resources between the actors of this system, often without openness and parliamentary control.⁴⁴⁴ An example is MFA State Secretary in this period, Jan Egeland, who later became head of the Norwegian Red Cross abroad, UN official, Secretary General of the International Red Cross and, today, Director of NUPI.

The strategy for Norwegian foreign policy in the nineties, and also the Barents Sea cooperation, as shown in the introduction, had been presented by Thorvald Stoltenberg. As mentioned above one of the main advisors to Stoltenberg through many years, was MFA official Knut Vollebæk, at this time foreign minister of the Bondevik I government. Stoltenberg had for example also been President of the Norwegian Red Cross.⁴⁴⁵

An additional momentum in regard of how different the conduct of Norwegian foreign policy could be is that, the small nation Norway has little hard power to place behind its demands in most regards. Any alleged actual aspiration to do well is restrained by

⁴⁴⁰ Matlary and Halvorsen 2006: 199.

⁴⁴¹ Riste 2005: 10.

⁴⁴² Matlary and Halvorsen, 2006: 199.

⁴⁴³ Terje Tvedt, *Utviklingshjelp, utenrikspolitikk og makt: Den norske modellen*, Oslo 2009: 129-130.

⁴⁴⁴ Tvedt 2009: 129, [Over tid er det utviklet en praksis hvor et lite antall personer sirkulerer mellom ledende posisjoner i state og organisasjonsliv, samtidig som de samme personene, ofte uten åpenhet og parlamentarisk kontroll, fordeler systemets ressurser mellom aktørene i systemet.]

⁴⁴⁵ Tvedt 2009: 132.

considerations of what state and situation Norway is facing. It follows that the ability to lead a substantially different or “better” foreign policy for the Bondevik I government was limited.

CORRODING CHECHEN CONDITIONS

The Khasavyurt Agreement and the following Moscow peace treaty can be seen as an uneasy truce.⁴⁴⁶ The two hopeful agreements signed by the Chechen president Maskhadov and Russian president Yeltsin held high promises that the two parts would never again raise arms against each other. The Russian army had more or less been unwillingly forced into the situation with poor equipment and it was defeated by a small insurgency army. Left on its own, Chechnya and the Maskhadov regime did not receive much support from the outside world, or in the words of James Hughes: “After the agreements of 1996 and 1997, Russia and the international system consigned Chechnya to a limbo status, effectively acknowledging Russia blockade.”⁴⁴⁷

Neither of Russia, the UN, the EU nor OSCE gave the financial aid needed to improve the situation, build infrastructure, and pay wages and pensions. The aid organisations, as shown, had all retreated from the area because of the labile security situation.⁴⁴⁸ The Chechen republic was not disarmed. Maskhadov was unable to gather the fractions in the small republic in the period between the signing of peace treaty of July 1997 and the second Russian invasion in September 1999. His power was constantly challenged by former allies, such as Shamil Basaev. The small republic was in a political and infrastructural mess. Kidnappings were again thriving. Acts of terrorism were increasingly occurring outside Chechnya more often than before. The window of opportunity that had been created through external involvement, negotiations and the peace treaty was soon closed. The future did not bode well for Chechnya in a period of “peace” that eventually led to a second war.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁶ Said 2007: 139.

⁴⁴⁷ Hughes 2007: 133.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid: 133.

⁴⁴⁹ Said 2007: 139; Bowker 2005: 229.

5: IN LIGHT OF THE 1999 OSCE - EXPERIENCE

Due to its OSCE chairmanship in 1999, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs became strongly engaged with two ferocious conflicts of escalating nature, both on European soil: the Kosovo conflict and a second Russo-Chechen war. Norwegian foreign minister Knut Vollebæk assumed the turn take position as Chairperson-in-office of the OSCE on 1 January 1999.⁴⁵⁰ On his first day in office he commented that: “[t]he challenge will be Kosovo, and both I personally, and the OSCE as organization, will be judged by what happens in Kosovo.”⁴⁵¹ Little could Vollebæk know that an additional conflict would concern him and the OSCE just as much in the upcoming fall. Russia invaded Chechnya a second time in September 1999. The second Russo-Chechen war can in many ways be seen as the test of how Norway balanced the chairmanship function with the close alignment to the USA, as Russia’s neighbour, as a state outside the EU and a high profile as human rights advocate.⁴⁵² How did the OSCE obligation affected Norway’s “policy” towards the Russo-Chechen conflict, and why?

NORWAY AND THE OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP

Already in 1998 when Norway, under foreign minister Vollebæk, entered the OSCE Chairmanship troika, the foreign minister had clear ambitions as to what he wanted to promote and achieve as Chairman-in-office. The OSCE troika consists of the Chairperson-in-Office assisted by the previous and succeeding chairperson.⁴⁵³ This structure ensures continuity of the organization’s activity. In 1999 the troika consisted of Poland, Austria and Norway.⁴⁵⁴ Vollebæk explicated four areas that were to guide his period. First, he wanted to promote consensus among the 54 member states. “One criterion for the success of Norway’s chairmanship will be whether it has the ability to balance the need for quick action against the need to find broadly based solutions.”⁴⁵⁵ Second, he wanted to enhance the “moral authority of the OSCE as a community of values”.⁴⁵⁶ A third primary aim was to define OSCE’s role in

⁴⁵⁰ «Vollebæk: Alarmerende signal fra Kosovo» [Alarming signals from Kosovo], *NTB*, 1.1.1999.

⁴⁵¹ «Kosovo bekymrer Vollebæk» [Kosovo worries Vollebæk], *Aftenposten*, 2.1.1999.

⁴⁵² «Et ambisiøst OSSE i vanskeligheter» [Ambitious OSCE in difficulty], *VG*, 9.12.1999.

⁴⁵³ <http://www.osce.org/about/13518.html> (13.5.2010)

⁴⁵⁴ «Fortsatt OSSE-press mot Russland» [Continued OSCE pressure against Russia], *NTB*, 1.1.1999; In 1998 the troika consisted of Denmark, Poland and Norway, and in 2000 it consisted of Norway, Austria and Romania.

⁴⁵⁵ Knut Vollebæk, «The Norwegian OSCE chairmanship», Speech at the OSCE Seminar in Oslo 22.10.1998, *UD informasjon* 1998, 25: 5.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid*: 5.

conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. His fourth area of priority was to enhance the operational capabilities of the organization.⁴⁵⁷ He considered the leadership task to be a challenge for Norway, but not a task too large. He ended his speech by saying that it was in Norway's interest to "take on responsibility and play a role in resolving burning issues in today's Europe."⁴⁵⁸

Vollebæk's State Secretary at the time, Janne Haaland Matlary, considered it the largest task Norway had ever had. The OSCE area consisted, after all, of 55 nations from "Vladivostok to Vancouver". With main focus on human rights she continued by stating why it was important for Norway to engage, but also with what would be Norway's contribution as leaders of the organization:⁴⁵⁹

First, she stated that Norway was obliged to be concerned with human rights violations, no matter where these might occur. Second, Norway was through the OSCE member of the same security and cooperation organization as nascent democracies in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and also bound by the same standards for human rights and democracy. She asserted that stability and peaceful development in the East had implications for European security and, thus, Norwegian security.⁴⁶⁰ The OSCE's struggle for human rights had been the main driving force since the beginning of the CSCE in 1975, she proceeded.⁴⁶¹

Norway was going to concentrate its efforts as chairman on the long term process of solving internal conflicts; increase Norwegian participation in the OSCE missions; and work to see that human rights and democracy received higher priority. In Central Asia, especially Caucasus, she perceived it of greatest importance to build local networks of non-governmental representatives that could work for what she called legitimate community interests. Norway would reinforce the OSCE office for democratic institutions and human rights (ODIHR). There was still a need for meetings for evaluating the respective countries compliance with the OSCE-commitments. This was where Norway would speak out and point out major violations.⁴⁶² In spite of Vollebæk's enormous energy and efforts put into the organization, the Norwegian OSCE period did not exactly, as will be shown below, see the fulfillment of Vollebæk and Matlary's goals.

⁴⁵⁷ Vollebæk 1998: 7.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid: 8.

⁴⁵⁹ Janne Haaland Matlary, «Norsk politikk i OSSE» [Norwegian Policy in the OSCE], *Dagbladet*, 2.2.1998.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Janne Haaland Matlary, «Norsk politikk i OSSE» [Norwegian Policy in the OSCE], *Dagbladet*, 2.2.1998.

Norway did engage in solving internal conflicts. In March 1999 the Bondevik 1 government supported NATO's decision to bomb Serbian forces in Kosovo. The situation in Kosovo early January 1999 had not promised peace. The truce between the Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic's Serbs and the Kosovo-Albanian insurgents who had committed themselves to outright independence, were frequently broken. Massive human rights violations were perpetrated by both sides and it seemed as if Serbian leader Milosevic was carrying out ethnic cleansing in the region.⁴⁶³ The OSCE mission in Kosovo was not successful. Chairperson Vollebæk had to withdraw the OSCE observers even before all of them were in place.⁴⁶⁴ Violence and massacres escalated after the observers left.⁴⁶⁵ NATO threatened to bomb Serbian targets if a peace agreement could not be reached.

Norway, usually averse to sanctions if it is not founded in UN legislation, supported the NATO bombing. The relationship between Russia, who sympathized with Serbia, and the NATO members became strained. Several other countries, Sweden for instance, and other members of the UN, were against the "humanitarian bombing". They did not see the legitimacy of the arguments for a humanitarian intervention. Norwegian Prime Minister Bondevik responded to the Swedish sceptic position by saying that NATO had to go through with the bombing or else it would have been an empty threat that would weaken NATO's legitimacy.⁴⁶⁶ In the UN Security Council two permanent members, China and Russia, dealt with the same challenges that were taking place in the former Yugoslavia. Both of the great powers had areas that wanted to achieve secession and sovereignty. In China several provinces wanted independence, whilst Russia was struggling with Chechen aspirations, amongst others. To China and Russia it was thus an unpopular decision to support independence for Kosovo, thus legitimizing a secessionist movement that was similar to the ones China and Russia had within their borders. The controversial NATO bombing of Serbian targets nonetheless commenced on 25 March.⁴⁶⁷

In a press conference the Norwegian Prime Minister Bondevik, foreign minister Vollebæk and defense minister Eldbjørg Løwer defended NATO and Norway's decision.⁴⁶⁸ Bondevik refuted that Norway was at war because, he argued, Norway had not declared war

⁴⁶³ Mark Weller, «The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo», *International Affairs* 1999, 2: 211-251.

⁴⁶⁴ «Norge på innsiden» [Norway on the inside], *VG*, 29.12.1999; «Norge som OSSE-leder: Kasteball i Europeisk mareritt» [Norway as OSCE-leader: Shuttlecock in European nightmare"], *Aftenposten*, 31.12.1999.

⁴⁶⁵ «Norge som OSSE-leder: Kasteball i Europeisk mareritt», *Aftenposten*, 31.12.1999.

⁴⁶⁶ «Norge er i krig, Bondevik i natt: Tungt ansvar» [Norway at war, Bondevik: Heavy responsibility], *Dagbladet*, 25.3.1999.

⁴⁶⁷ «Norge er i krig, Bondevik i natt: Tungt ansvar», *Dagbladet*, 25.3.1999.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

against another state. He preferred to call it participation in a limited military operation.⁴⁶⁹ Bondevik did not, when requested, define the difference between limited military action and war. The Norwegian government insisted that it was a humanitarian intervention. The Prime Minister asked rhetorically what the alternative was, and answered that it would have been to let Milosevic continue the severe violence against the Kosovo-Albanians. The NATO operation was not defined by a time limit, but the prime minister hoped it would be over in the shortest possible time. The two main purposes were to reduce the Serbian military capabilities and “make Milosevic think things through and decide to sit down by the negotiation table.”⁴⁷⁰ Even though, according to Bondevik, it was: “with heavy-heart that we send Norwegian forces into battle”, Norway chose to support NATO and by this showed strong allegiance towards USA.

The NATO allegiance seemed stronger than Norway’s allegiance towards the UN.⁴⁷¹ In addition to Norway’s support of a controversial intervention, Vollebæk’s double-role was considered unfortunate by Russia and others. The question posed was how the OSCE could function as a conflict-preventive organization when the chairmanship, Norway, was members of NATO. Vollebæk himself did not deem it to be a problem to be in official capacity as both.⁴⁷² Vollebæk had in 1998 stated that he considered it a crucial advantage that Norway at the same time as the OSCE engagement was a committed member of NATO and familiar with the operating procedures of the Alliance, because NATO was majorly involved in the peace efforts in former Yugoslavia.⁴⁷³

BANDS OF BANDITS AND RUSSIAN HAWKS

Concurrently in Chechnya, disorder thrived. Without external economic or political help, President Maskhadov was locked in an unpleasant and seemingly hopeless position. He could not deliver relief to his citizens, whose living conditions were little improved. In addition, he did not manage to control the warlords that had fought besides him during the first Russo-Chechen war. It provided extremist groups led by Shamil Basaev and others with a chance to pursue their own economic and political agenda. Kidnapping, robbery and criminal

⁴⁶⁹ [- Jeg vil reservere meg mot ordet krig. Vi er med i en begrenset militær aksjon, sa Bondevik.] «Norge er i krig, Bondevik i natt: Tungt ansvar», *Dagbladet*, 25.3.1999

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² «Norge som OSSE-leder: Kasteball i Europeisk mareritt», *Aftenposten*, 31.12.1999.

⁴⁷³ Vollebæk 1998: 4.

exploitation thrived and concerned not only the civilians in Chechnya, but also the population in the surrounding republics.⁴⁷⁴

Every once in a while Russian officials were sent as special envoys to Chechnya. On several occasions, however, a local warlord managed to kidnap them. Needless to say, this had little reconciliatory effect on the Kremlin. When the Russian General Gennadij Sjpigun was kidnapped from the airport after talks with President Maskhadov in March 1999, Sergej Stepasjin, then Interior Minister, reportedly threw a fit and threatened Chechnya with a new war.⁴⁷⁵ It was the second Russian envoy this had happened to in a short period of time. Valentin Vlasov, Yeltsin's special envoy to Chechnya, had been detained and kept as prisoner in Chechnya from May to December 1998, thoroughly marked by it when returned.⁴⁷⁶

The same Vlasov turned up at the Norwegian embassy to Moscow in late January 1999 to inform the OSCE mission group about the situation in Chechnya. Odd Gunnar Skagestad, the Norwegian leader of the mission had been in Moscow for about a week, patiently waiting for the situation in the republic to improve, so that he could head into Grozny. The OSCE mission group had been forced to leave its office in Grozny in 1998, when the security situation became intolerable. With his suitcases ready the only thing holding him and his six delegates back was lack of *carte blanche* from Russian authorities due to deteriorating security situation in the republic.⁴⁷⁷ According to Skagestad Russian authorities would not provide security for the OSCE staff in Grozny, it is unclear whether this was due to incapability or unwillingness to do so.⁴⁷⁸

Prior to a meeting with Foreign Minister Vollebæk March 1999, Primakov, Prime Minister since August 1998, calmed the "war-talk" when he told journalists that he "was not going to be dragged off into a war adventure in Chechnya".⁴⁷⁹ President Yeltsin, allegedly, from his hospital bed, had given Primakov warrant to "solve" the crisis in Chechnya.⁴⁸⁰ Several commentators saw this as an attempt by Yeltsin to get rid of Primakov by giving him an impossible task. Primakov did not swallow the bait. General Leontij Kuznetsov, leader of the Moscow military district, affirmed this policy when he made clear that the Russian Army

⁴⁷⁴ Hughes 2007: 96.

⁴⁷⁵ «Russland vil ikke ha noen ny krig i Tsjetsjenia» [Russia does not want a new war in Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 12.3.1999; Hughes 2007: 96.

⁴⁷⁶ «Farlig oppdrag for norsk OSSE utsending» [Dangerous mission for Norwegian OSSE delegate], *Aftenposten*, 29.1.1999

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Conversation with Odd Gunnar Skagestad, 15.4.2010.

⁴⁷⁹ «Russland vil ikke ha noen ny krig i Tsjetsjenia» [Russia does not want a new war in Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 12.3.1999

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

did not want a new war in Chechnya.⁴⁸¹ It has since been claimed by central Russian decision makers such as former Prime Minister Sergej Stepasjin, that the invasion of Chechnya had been carefully planned already in March 1999.⁴⁸²

President Maskhadov reportedly made solid efforts, unfortunately in vain, to retrieve general Sjipigun, who later turned up dead. No talks on Chechnya's final status were commenced, although Maskhadov tried to initiate this. It is in addition claimed that military views in Russia that Chechnya was "unfinished business" did not improve the situation.⁴⁸³ A new war might not only restore morale, but also replenish military power, which had been significantly depleted by the 1994-96 war and further run down by budget cuts in its aftermath.⁴⁸⁴

The situation was described by both sides with the word *tupik*, dead-end.⁴⁸⁵ As the relations between federal authorities and Chechnya were maxing out, a new kid in town appeared, and along with a couple of major incidents described below, tipped the situation in favor of a second Russian invasion.

VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RISE TO POWER: A GREY BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Regardless of motives and justifications, the second Russo-Chechen war had "a remarkable impact on the career of Vladimir Putin".⁴⁸⁶ The former KGB operative was plucked from obscurity to become President Yeltsin's successor. It is suggested by many that Putin's legitimacy was built entirely on the war.⁴⁸⁷ When Basaev and his Saudi ally al-Khattab invaded the Botlikh highland area of Dagestan in early August 1999, the Kremlin was offered a legitimate reason to intervene militarily against Chechnya.⁴⁸⁸

Also, seemingly as a result of the Basaev-invasion, Sergej Stepasjin, who had taken over the Prime Minister post from Primakov in May 1999, and associated with the failure of the first war, was sacked and replaced by Putin, Yeltsin's hand-picked successor. Yeltsin's government had been a revolving door the last years.⁴⁸⁹ Putin, also called "the grey eminence", had a low public profile in Russia, and both Putin and Yeltsin's ratings on the

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² «Tsjetsjenia-krigen nøye planlagt» [Chechen War carefully planned], *Aftenposten*, 22.1.2000.

⁴⁸³ Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?*, Washington D.C. 2002: 73.

⁴⁸⁴ Hughes 2007: 108.

⁴⁸⁵ Hughes 2007: 97.

⁴⁸⁶ Said 2007: 141.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid: 141.

⁴⁸⁸ Hughes 2007: 105.

⁴⁸⁹ «Russland's mange regjeringsskifter» [Russia's many regime changes], *NTB*, 9.8.1999.

opinion polls, conducted in August 1999, were extremely low. The Yeltsin “family” had six months to build Putin’s authority before the Presidential elections.⁴⁹⁰

Vollebæk visited the Kremlin on 7 September 1999. He was requested to support, or at least display understanding of, the Russian military interventions against what the Russian foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, called Islamist separatists in Dagestan, the mountainous neighbor republic to Chechnya. Ivanov specified that the conflict was an internal Russian affair.⁴⁹¹ Vollebæk visited both as Norwegian foreign minister and, perhaps more important to Ivanov, chairperson-in-office of the OSCE. Ivanov, according to Vollebæk, was seeking OSCE’s unambiguous condemnation of the Islamist guerrilla. Ivanov’s request was not immediately met by the chairperson, but Vollebæk did express his concern over the situation. He was careful to add that the Russian advance to “set things straight” in the region, had to be done by reasonable measures and avoid unnecessary use of force.⁴⁹² Vollebæk linked the situation to Chechnya, when he told the journalist that OSCE had not been asked to contribute to solve the armed situation in the region. The Islamist militants in Dagestan were closely knit with the insurgency in Chechnya, where the OSCE actually had a mandate, but could not perform its task due to the security situation.⁴⁹³

Things came to a head, and on 5 September 1999 Russian military forces attacked Chechnya’s Dagestan border with rockets and artillery. Before the Chechen attacks and the Russian assault had settled, a series of bombs went off in apartment blocks in Moscow, Volgograd and the Dagestani town of Buynaks. It has never been made clear who was behind the terrorist actions, but the blame was placed on Chechen insurgents.⁴⁹⁴ The apartment bombings fitted into the “pattern” of Chechen terrorism at Budennovsk and Pervomayskoye, although both Basaev and Maskhadov ardently denied any involvement. Basaev had always taken personal responsibility for his operations.⁴⁹⁵ Suspicion of the Russian Federal Intelligence Bureau (FSB) involvement was raised when federal security forces were “caught with their pants down” planting explosives in the basement of an apartment block in the Russian city Ryazan. It was later excused by the government as a counter-terrorist exercise.⁴⁹⁶

Almost 300 civilians were killed and molested in the apartment building attacks and fear spread throughout the federation. The tragic incidents roused support for a military

⁴⁹⁰ Hughes 2007: 108.

⁴⁹¹ «Russlands ba Vollebæk om støtte i Dagestan» [Russia asks Vollebæk for support in Dagestan], *NTB*, 7.9.1999.

⁴⁹² «Den snikende tragedien i Kaukasus» [Lurking tragedy in the Caucasus], *Bergens Tidende*, 11.9.1999.

⁴⁹³ «Russlands ba Vollebæk om støtte i Dagestan», *NTB*, 7.9.1999.

⁴⁹⁴ Hughes, 2007: 110.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid: 110.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid: 110.

intervention across the Russian Federation and through the layers of mass media and the public. Putin could portray the situation as a “counter-terrorist” operation.⁴⁹⁷

A SECOND RUSSIAN INVASION OF CHECHNYA

On 1 October, Russian federal forces invaded Chechnya and with overwhelming use of military power. 80,000 Russian troops were used against an estimated 3000 rebels.⁴⁹⁸ Russia’s leading human rights activist and former human rights commissioner under Yeltsin, Sergei Kovaljov was quoted in response to the second Russian invasion saying: “We borrow NATO’s methodology while acting on the basis of Milosevic’s ideology.”⁴⁹⁹ According to Senior Researcher at the International Peace research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), Pavel Baev, the massive grouping assembled moved slowly into Chechnya behind a barrage of artillery fire. Every point of resistance on the road towards Grozny was smashed by concentrated firepower, and the capital itself was thoroughly and systematically destroyed rather than stormed.⁵⁰⁰ “Nobody expected a low-casualty “peacemaking” operation, there were few concerns about the “collateral damage” and there was not much pressure to achieve a quick victory.”⁵⁰¹ The next two years the federal forces deployed step by step into the mountainous parts, taking control of towns and villages. Consolidating territorial control took a heavy toll. Nevertheless, from 2001 the troops were settled into fortified garrisons leaving them only for raids into the mountains or “cleansing”, *Zakhista*, of towns and villages.⁵⁰²

REACTIONS TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION

Foreign minister Vollebæk stated to inquiring journalists that he was seriously worried about the development in Chechnya. At the time of the invasion he was on a tour of the Central Asian states, encouraging more cooperation between them to prevent further deterioration in regional security. The OSCE had offered the Kremlin assistance to improve the situation in the Northern Caucasus, but it would not come to OSCE interference without invitation from Russia, he added. Norway’s ambassador to Moscow, Per Tresselt expressed concern on behalf of the OSCE Troika. The Troika, now consisting of Austria and Poland in addition to Norway, was primarily worried about the humanitarian situation. About 100,000 refugees

⁴⁹⁷ Hughes, 2007: 110.

⁴⁹⁸ Pavel Baev, «Chechnya and the Russian Military», Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005: 119; Said 1997: 141.

⁴⁹⁹ Said 2007: 142.

⁵⁰⁰ Baev 2005: 119.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid: 118.

⁵⁰² Ibid: 119.

were on the move in the region, and it was a huge destabilizing factor. The OSCE had made efforts to be present in Chechnya, offered its services and at the same time recognized Russia's territorial integrity and made a point of condemning terrorism.⁵⁰³

The Norwegian chairman was interviewed about the Russian invasion and said that the only effort the OSCE could attempt at that time, was to keep in touch with the various groups involved in the conflict. Although Vollebæk was considerate of the aversion to maintain dialogue with certain protagonists in conflicts like this, he referred to the experience of how important it was to achieve dialogue with everyone early on, in any conflict. His hope was that the Kremlin would initiate dialogue with the groups in Chechnya, and negotiate forth a peaceful solution.⁵⁰⁴

Vollebæk was asked if OSCE would have handled the situation different or been more "persuasive" if it had been a smaller state than Russia that was on the warpath. Vollebæk answered diplomatically that the OSCE was concerned with the situation in all the member countries and that the organization was built on consensus. It could not impose decisions on a member state. That was why the Troika had inquired the Kremlin on the matter and tried to evoke dialogue. He referred to the situation in Chechnya as a tragedy, and that OSCE in the end could only relate to Russian authorities and hope that the Organization could be helpful in the situation.⁵⁰⁵ The situation in Chechnya quickly challenged all four of Vollebæk's explicated goals. The "ability to balance the need for quick action against the need to find broadly based solutions" seemed to come short, as Russia did not want any external involvement. Also, the "moral authority of the OSCE as a community of values", that Vollebæk had wanted to enhance, seemed to be struggling to exist at all. Some would say it had received a seriously blow already in February 1999 when OSCE had to withdraw all its personnel and its leader, Vollebæk, supported the controversial bombing of Kosovo.

In 1998, Vollebæk's State Secretary Matlary had found the OSCE standards for human rights to be satisfying and regarded the main challenge primarily to be to make sure that the member nations lived up to expectations. She continued by stating that the new political epoch made it possible to see that the standards were implemented through solid cooperation. In practice, she said, this meant that the OSCE could not only *criticize* human rights violation at OSCE meetings, but actually be *present*, and enforce practical action, in the

⁵⁰³ «Vollebæk vil ikke gripe inn uten Kremls samtykke» [Vollebæk will not interfere without Kremlin's approval], *Aftenposten*, 3.10.1999.

⁵⁰⁴ «Vollebæk vil ikke gripe inn uten Kremls samtykke», *Aftenposten*, 3.10.1999.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

area of concern.⁵⁰⁶ Obviously, as seen above, OSCE in the new epoch was not distinctively more effective than it had been before Matlary's comment. The OSCE was not even *allowed* to be present in the areas where it was needed the most.

Chris Hunter, senior researcher at the Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development (CPCD), in Moscow, claimed that the West was being too mild in its reactions to the Russian invasion of Chechnya at a conference at the PRIO in Oslo. He pointed out that Russia's "internal conflict" violated commitments in the Council of Europe, and OSCE, and therefore should not be perceived as internal. Ingvar Havnen, Vollebæk's spokesman, discarded Hunter's criticism on behalf of Norway by claiming that there had not been lack of criticism from Norway's government or the OSCE. He reminded Hunter that Russia had rejected all form for external assistance to solve the conflict and added to it that Russia was not the only perpetrator of violent escalation in the conflict.⁵⁰⁷ Hunter sparred that the surrounding world and the western governments should not accept that the Chechen civilians became the victims subjected to a second brutal war, no matter who the main perpetrators were. The conflict had to be solved politically, argued Hunter. The Russian military invasion would not end terrorism, it would only increase and radicalize the groups involved.⁵⁰⁸ Hunter claimed that it was possible to stall Kremlin's military actions by economical sanctions, i.e. holding back funds from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for instance.⁵⁰⁹

Nonetheless, James Hughes argues, in his thorough study of the Russo-Chechen conflict, that "the leading European powers consistently deflected any attempt to *seriously* sanction Russia for its policy in Chechnya, even at the height of the military campaign in late 1999".⁵¹⁰ Western media portrayed the second Russian invasion as a pretext for Putin to push himself as the successor of Yeltsin as Russian president, and this time the rhetoric from official Western circles sounded less supportive. While the official position hardly changed in practice, there was a greater willingness among Western leaders to criticize the war in public. The West still acknowledged Russia's right to defend its territorial integrity, but was more open in its concern over proportionality.⁵¹¹

However, "European leaders interested in improving their relations with Putin and Russia, and securing economic opportunities, frequently expressed their solidarity with Putin

⁵⁰⁶ Janne Haaland Matlary, «Norsk politikk i OSSE», *Dagbladet*, 2.2.1998.

⁵⁰⁷ «Russland får fritt spillerom» [Russia is given free reins], *Aftenposten*, 3.10.1999.

⁵⁰⁸ «Russland får fritt spillerom», *Aftenposten*, 3.10.1999.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Hughes 2007: 131.

⁵¹¹ Bowker 2005: 231.

in his struggle against “terrorism” even before 9/11.”⁵¹² British Prime Minister Tony Blair exclaimed that they had made clear their concerns over Chechnya and any question of human rights abuses there, “though it is important to realize that Chechnya is not Kosovo... the Russians have been subjected to really severe terrorist attacks.”⁵¹³ Tony Blair had a point: Chechnya was not Kosovo. However, the difference was not only the terrorist issue, but also that massive Russia was not small Serbia. Not only was Russia a large power, but it had several possibilities to influence control on international decision-making.

In regards of Kosovo Russia were part of the Contact Group along with the United States, United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany. They were also part of the OSCE, which despite a membership of 50 nations, still acted on a consensus principle. Beyond this, Russia enjoyed veto powers in the UN Security Council.⁵¹⁴ There existed a difference between Western Europe and the former Soviet-sphere nations in Eastern Europe. The latter were much more suspicious towards Russia and more sympathetic to the Chechen cause than the West due to the fact that Eastern European leaders in many cases had first hand knowledge of Russian control and oppression.⁵¹⁵

Compared to the first war there was also some difference as to how Russian leaders received the Western criticism. In the period of the first war Yeltsin made efforts to establish a Western inspired democratic state and society. The effort of trying to make Russia “ashamed” of its conduct in Chechnya by giving them “unwanted” attention may have been effective in the first period. Norwegian diplomats and Foreign Minister Godal also “felt” that this approach had an effect on the Russian decision makers and that a common understanding existed.⁵¹⁶

However, when Norway in March 1999 agreed to join forces with other NATO members in the bombing of Kosovo it opened for new problematic questions. When defending Norway’s participation to the Norwegian people, the Norwegian government took part in a western dictate of what was legitimate international conduct in a conflict situation. Bondevik used his carefully chosen words to legitimize Norway’s participation. As the Western nations legitimized an intervention by bombing another European power, Russia could use the same language and the same strategy in what the Kremlin considered an internal affair. In addition, the attempt to make Russia ashamed of its own conduct did not have the

⁵¹² Hughes 2007: 131.

⁵¹³ Ibid: 132.

⁵¹⁴ Weller 1999:

⁵¹⁵ Hughes 2007: 132.

⁵¹⁶ Interview with Bjørn Tore Godal, 9.12.2009

same effect on Russia after the Kosovo bombing as it had seemingly had before. When Putin took over the leadership, Western criticism of Russia in Chechnya, in Abkhazia and North Ossetia was increasingly met by a deaf ear.

As Vollebæk stated, the OSCE would await acceptance from the Kremlin to become involved in the Russo-Chechen conflict. The ambitious Norwegian chairman's hands were helplessly tied. When asked years later if Norway considered sanctions against Russia, Vollebæk answered that Norway usually prefers sanctions to go through the UN system.⁵¹⁷ Vollebæk and the Norwegian government supported military sanctions against Serbia as a last resort to protect Kosovo-Albanians lives and stop the massive human rights violations against civilians. According to Vollebæk the NATO bombing of Serbian targets had support in UN Security Council resolutions, such as resolution no. 1199 of 23 September 1998, which stated that the situation in the Former Yugoslavia posed a threat to international peace and security. The decision and its resonance were - and still are - seen by many internationally as highly controversial.⁵¹⁸ As for the situation in Chechnya, sanctions against Russia had never been seriously considered, according to Vollebæk:

Neither Norway nor other countries has so far considered the use of sanctions as an appropriate means to pressurize Russian authorities. The introduction of sanctions would in my opinion lead to further isolation of Russia and make the efforts to establish political dialogue between the [conflicting] parts more difficult. Nevertheless, the government follows the development closely.⁵¹⁹

Parliament member Ingvald Godal (Conservative) was posing the above stated questions to Vollebæk during the Parliament's *Oral Question Hour*, and did not seem quite satisfied with Vollebæk's answers. Ingvald Godal inquired again, with the sanctions against Serbia and Milosevic in mind, how come Russia was not facing any such consequences, "not even economical sanctions."⁵²⁰ Vollebæk replied that "I have to say that what took place in Kosovo was terrible and a striking violation of everything we understand by human worth." Vollebæk's answer seems suggests that Vollebæk considered what was taking place in Kosovo *exceptionally* bad and worse than what was occurring in Chechnya, as he uses this as argumentation for the moral side of the intervention argument. However, Vollebæk added:

⁵¹⁷ Phone Interview with Knut Vollebæk, 17.2.2010

⁵¹⁸ Parliament's Oral Question Hour, Question 4, 19.1.2000, <http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/1999-2000/000119/ordinarsporretime/4/> (13.5.2010)

⁵¹⁹ Parliament's Oral Question Hour, Question 4, 19.1.2000.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

“We have not left Russia alone. We constantly pressurize Russia, and my hope is that this pressure and the dialogue will be rewarding.”⁵²¹

Ingvald Godal claimed that there existed several economical measures that could have been expedient. He thought that if the Russians were allowed to get away with their conduct in Chechnya time after time, the threshold would become lower to intervene in additional areas. He claimed that if the Russians had met serious sanctions and non-acceptance during the first war in 1994-96, he believed that the chances of re-engaged Russian warfare would have been less. Godal also remarked that Norway had a tendency to act morally towards problems far away, but had a “sad tradition” of groveling at the Russian’s feet. He hoped that if the Council of Europe decided to suspend Russia, Norway would support it.⁵²²

If measures were to have an effect, Vollebæk believed that the international community had to agree on them, and added that Norway had tried to affect such measures in various contexts where this was natural. At the same time Vollebæk wanted to remind the assembly that, sanctions and boycotts were last resort of international measures. “We wish to achieve a breakthrough for our view through dialogue of mutual efforts.” It was Vollebæk’s hope that it would not be necessary to follow the same procedures towards Russia as towards Serbia.⁵²³ Why the discrepancy of military sanctions in Kosovo, and none-at-all in Chechnya?

KOSOVO AND CHECHNYA – DIFFERENCES IN SEARCH OF AN EXPLANATION

It is *possible* to compare the secessionist situations in Chechnya and Kosovo, although many would not agree that it would be *legitimate* to compare the two. The latter could, for instance, argue that there waste historical differences and also refer to the acts of terrorism in Russia. Nonetheless, they were both secessionist conflicts occurring simultaneously.⁵²⁴

The Kosovo authorities called for secession from Serbia, as did the Chechen leaders from Russia. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consistently rejected any international interest in the affairs of Kosovo, which it considered an entirely domestic matter, much like the Russian stand towards the Chechen insurgency.⁵²⁵ The two conflicts also shared the fate of extreme brutality perpetrated against the civilian population. However, Kosovo received significantly more attention than Chechnya also in Norway, in mass media and official reactions.⁵²⁶ With

⁵²¹ Parliament’s Oral Question Hour, Question 4, 19.1.2000

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ The comparative subchapter is only provided to shed some light on Western approach to Chechnya, and will not provide what is in reality a highly technical study of internal law, secessionist movements, etc.

⁵²⁵ Weller 1999.

⁵²⁶ See appendix II, Analysis of news paper articles on Kosovo and Chechnya.

these things in mind a small discussion, on what many views as an inconsistency of Western and in this regard Norwegian response is needed.

Professor Hughes claims that “the international approach to the secession of Chechnya has an obvious comparison with that of Chechnya.”⁵²⁷ As the EU and the USA according to Hughes drove the UN toward recognizing Kosovo’s sovereignty, with or without Serbia’s agreement, it became a clear double-standard compared with Western approach to Chechnya’s secession. In the latter case there was absence of both international moral and material support, but also an ever-present recognition of the Chechen conflict as an internal Russian matter.⁵²⁸ In the words of Hughes “it suggests that *realpolitik* trumped *idealpolitik* as the U.S. and the EU refused to put international cooperation and lucrative trade at risk by challenging Russia over Chechnya.”⁵²⁹

Another side to a Chechnya-Kosovo comparative is that during the 1990s the Western attitude towards humanitarian operations changed. The perception of the efficacy of “humanitarian interventions” rose with what was seen as an effective intervention by NATO, following the Srebrenica massacre in 1995, to force the belligerent groups in former Yugoslavia to sign the Dayton treaty.⁵³⁰ This had consequences for the perception of the conflict between Russia and Chechnya:

European public opinion had sided with the “victims” – Croats, Muslims and Albanians in Kosovo for whom independence and self-determination seemed the solution. These views of “right” and “wrong” were by analogy projected on to Russia and Chechnya. It seemed easy to from a distance to make judgements regarding the conflict. An equally simple solution would be the participation of international forces in settling the problems of the Caucasus.⁵³¹

Public opinion and human rights organization played a large part in this. The latter, while informing the world about the mass violations of human rights in a region, simultaneously warned states and organizations against hasty action that could infringe norms and procedures established by international law.⁵³² Human rights expert Asbjørn Eide’s comments in 1995 represented this point of view.⁵³³ Norwegian NGOs did however increasingly condemn the “mild” response/reaction towards Russia.⁵³⁴

⁵²⁷ Hughes 2007: 195.

⁵²⁸ Ibid: 196.

⁵²⁹ Ibid: 196.

⁵³⁰ Cherkasov and Grushkin 2005: 133.

⁵³¹ Ibid: 133.

⁵³² Ibid: 133.

⁵³³ See chapter 3, page 54-55.

⁵³⁴ See chapter 6, *the self-imposed silence must cease*.

It is feasible to say that the NATO decision to bomb Serbian targets in Kosovo undermined international organizations such as the EU, the OSCE and not least the so-called corner stone of Norwegian foreign policy, the UN. NATO had no UN mandate to proceed with the attacks, however NATO's general secretary Javier Solana argued that it was a "moral duty" to intervene in Kosovo.⁵³⁵

A central Norwegian diplomat claimed that Milosevic was planning or already perpetrating genocide in the Kosovo-Albanians and that was not what the Russians "had in mind" for the Chechens. Further, the Western governments felt that they could not stand on the sideline and watch a new massacre occur, such as the one in Srebrenica where Serbian forces killed 8000 Bosnian men without interference. It seems as if the general view was that the overall situation in Kosovo was "humanitarianly" speaking worse than what was taking place in Chechnya. However, the diplomat added that if NATO had intervened in Chechnya the way they did in Kosovo, it could ultimately triggered a Third World War.⁵³⁶

OSLO SUMMIT MEETING, 1-2 NOVEMBER 1999

Although a pressing issue, Kosovo and Chechnya was not the only conflicts concerning the Western leaders in 1999. A Middle East Summit was taking in place in Oslo early November 1999. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin attended the Oslo Middle East Summit Meeting along with USA's President Bill Clinton, Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Putin came instead of the, literally, grand old man Yeltsin, and it was an opportunity for Norway to establish contact with what was potentially Russia's new leader. Political commentators claimed that the relations between the West and Russia were warming up again after the icy front caused by the NATO bombing.⁵³⁷

Chechnya was on all diplomatic lips during the Middle East Summit. Prime Minister Bondevik discussed the situation under bilateral talks with Clinton, with Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari and Javier Solana, Head Coordinator of a united EU Defense and Security policy. Bondevik stated what was quite usual when referring to the Russo-Chechen conflict: "Chechnya is a difficult matter, and we have to respect Russia's integrity as a nation. But we

⁵³⁵ NATO Press release no. 1999(040), 23.3.1999, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-040e.htm> (13.5.2010)

⁵³⁶ Informant wanted to remain anonymous, however, the person is on the list of interviews.

⁵³⁷ «Lysning mot øst» [Brightening in the East], VG, 31.10.1999.

cannot accept the Russian Army's conduct in the small republic."⁵³⁸ Solana stated that they could not avoid commenting "when Russia acts the way they do in the Caucasus."⁵³⁹

Putin and Bondevik held a one hour long bilateral talk. Prime Minister Putin reportedly said that "Russia would not negotiate with terrorists", but he would try to make it easier for international organizations to help the civilians.⁵⁴⁰ Putin did his best, according to Bondevik, to "explain" what was "really" taking place in Chechnya. Bondevik claimed he did not "buy" the Russian version altogether, but added that "Norway recognizes Russian territorial integrity".⁵⁴¹ Bondevik continued by saying that the government was very worried about the consequences for the civilian population in the midst of the military operation in Chechnya. There is an utmost serious refugee problem in the region, he said, and ended his comments by saying that if the Russian warfare continues on the same path, it could become a burden on Russian relations with Norway and other countries.⁵⁴²

Bondevik had told Putin that the conflict needed to be solved politically, and the Russian prime minister reportedly agreed. Nevertheless, he repeated that Russia would not compromise with terrorists. The Russian army was busy removing "uninvited guests", as the Russian Prime Minister called it, and liberating the Chechen population from terrorists. His final comment to Bondevik was that he was glad to have reached an understanding about terrorism's threat against humanity through their conversation.⁵⁴³

During the Russo-Norwegian press conference, good relations between the two nations were confirmed by both, and Putin said he wanted to make sure that Russo-Norwegian trade was further developed in the near future. The two prime ministers were both worried about the nuclear waste in the high north. The press conference also highlighted the fact that Russia was violating the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. Putin himself wrote a declaration that due to the war in Chechnya, Russia had violated this agreement by having too many tanks, artillery guns, and other arms in an operative state. These would be withdrawn and destroyed as soon as Russia had neutralized opposition and controlled Chechnya. The declaration stated that Russia wanted to ensure as much openness and transparency as possibly.⁵⁴⁴

⁵³⁸ « Ahtisaari vil ikke love Norge forhandlingshjelp » [Ahtisaari will not promise Norway help in negotiations], *NTB*, 2.11.1999.

⁵³⁹ « Ahtisaari vil ikke love Norge forhandlingshjelp » [Ahtisaari will not promise Norway help in negotiations], *NTB*, 2.11.1999.

⁵⁴⁰ « Putin utelukker kompromiss med "terrorister" » [Putin no compromise with "terrorist"], *NTB*, 1.11.1999.

⁵⁴¹ « Putin utelukker kompromiss med "terrorister" », *NTB*, 1.11.1999.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

One of four promised humanitarian corridors for Chechen civilians were held open a few hours concurrently with the Russo-Norwegian talks in Oslo. As Russian soldiers sealed it off again thousands of people waiting to leave the republic were told to come back another day. Only two carloads of refugees had been able to get through. The week before, Russia had closed the border for the first time. The act caused condemnation from a large variety of actors, from the president of the neighbouring Ingushetia Ruslan Aushev, to the UN and various other international organizations.⁵⁴⁵

On 2 November 1999 Russian authorities gave their clearance to send an OSCE mission led by Norway to survey the situation. The Chechen President, Maskhadov, in this period, reportedly sent letters to several OSCE state leaders, desperately seeking external mediation assistance.⁵⁴⁶

ISTANBUL OSCE SUMMIT MEETING, STILL NOVEMBER 1999

Chechnya became the main topic at the Istanbul Summit Meeting 18-19 November, and it led to a new icy front between the Western governments and Russia. Almost three weeks had passed since Vollebæk and the OSCE was promised entrance by Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov to survey the situation in Chechnya, but no permission was obtained from the Kremlin.⁵⁴⁷ During a press conference in Oslo 15 November, Vollebæk demanded that the Russians needed to come forth with a time schedule for withdrawal of Russian forces in Chechnya. He repeated the request to let the OSCE mission into northern parts of Chechnya and establish an OSCE office in Ingushetia.⁵⁴⁸

The past year had turned out to be a frustrating year for Vollebæk, although he claims he would have gone through it again if he was given the chance.⁵⁴⁹ He was a small state actor caught in a sticky structural web of power politics. Now a second conflict would bring the year to an even darker end for the energetic Norwegian chairman full of good intentions and will to make a difference. The role as Chairperson-in-office had from day one put the function as Norwegian Foreign Minister in the background, although he managed to keep up bilateral conversations if it suited the occasion. During the year he had 150 days and nights of traveling

⁵⁴⁵ «Putin utelukker kompromiss med "terrorister"», *NTB*, 1.11.1999.

⁵⁴⁶ «Russland advarer mot OSSE-møte i Tsjetsjenia's tegn» [Russia warns against an OSCE meeting in the sign of Chechnya], *NTB*, 10.11.1999.

⁵⁴⁷ «Vollebæk: OSSE sender folk til Tsjetsjenia» [Vollebæk: OSCE sends people into Chechnya], *NTB*, 2.11.1999

⁵⁴⁸ «Russerne må sette en frist for tilbaketrekning fra Tsjetsjenia» [Russians must set a deadline for withdrawal from Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 16.11.1999.

⁵⁴⁹ «Vollebæks verden» [Vollebæk's World], *Aftenposten*, 24.12.1999; «Vollebæk satte tidenes reiserekord» [Vollebæk sets traveling record], *Dagbladet*, 29.1.2000.

and visited 40 countries. Many from his team of 28 Norwegian diplomats would at the end of the year be physically and mentally sick from exhaustion.⁵⁵⁰ Vollebæk had used enormous amounts of energy and resources on the Kosovo conflict. It had not brought forth great results on the part of OSCE. Not until the great powers involved themselves, especially through NATO. OSCE, in spite of lots of will and good intentions, was seemingly too unconsolidated and had little power to back up their decisions with.

During the Istanbul meeting Vollebæk was busy negotiating between Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and the most powerful OSCE members, trying to find agreement on the development of the re-engaged Russo-Chechen warfare. Three demands were at this point directed to the Kremlin by the OSCE chairmanship. First, Russian authorities had to let the OSCE mission team into Chechnya for observation. Second, OSCE should be allowed to have a political role in the conflict. Third, an OSCE office had to be allowed in Ingushetia. The British, French, American and Italian heads of state as well as Norway would refuse to sign the renegotiated CFE-treaty until Russia yielded to all three of the demands that had been put forth. During the Istanbul Summit, Russia was under more pressure over the situation in Chechnya than it had been before. Norway took part in pressurizing Russia more fervently than perhaps at any time during the first war, however, it was safely within the sphere of other Western governments' approach.

The fronts were staunch. The Russians had already, in early November, stated that they did not mind discussing Chechnya, but they warned against making Chechnya the main subject of the Istanbul OSCE meeting.⁵⁵¹ Yeltsin said that the demands were out of the question and that Russian forces were not retreating until every terrorist in the region was wiped out.⁵⁵² The Russian President left the Istanbul Summit in a demonstrative anger. The unfolding of the summit itself looked disastrous. Vollebæk became worried that the renegotiated CFE treaty stood in danger of not being signed by everyone since Russia had broken the agreement in Chechnya and moreover would not yield with regards to OSCE commitment in Chechnya.⁵⁵³ The original CFE-Treaty on reduction of conventional forces in Europe had been negotiated in November 1990 between NATO and the Warsaw pact. Due to the NATO enlargement with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, the treaty had been

⁵⁵⁰ «Vollebæks verden» [Vollebæk's World], *Aftenposten*, 24.12.1999; «Norge som OSSE-leder: Kasteball i Europeisk mareritt», *Aftenposten*, 31.12.1999.

⁵⁵¹ «Russland advarer mot OSSE-møte i Tsjetsjenias tegn», *NTB*, 10.11.1999

⁵⁵² «Presset Russerne på toppmøte i natt» [Pressured the Russians at the Summit Meeting], *VG*, 18.11.1999

⁵⁵³ «OSSE krise i natt: isfront mellom Russland og Vesten» [OSCE crisis: Icy fronts between Russia and the West], *Dagbladet*, 18.11.1999

renegotiated in the course of 1999 and was ready to be signed at the Istanbul Summit.⁵⁵⁴ After what was referred to as tough negotiations in Norwegian newspapers, the Russian's gave way to the three demands and the CFE-treaty was signed.

Norwegian Prime Minister Bondevik was so satisfied that he celebrated with a cigar stating that: "he was on Norway's behalf proud of the carrying out of the Summit Meeting".⁵⁵⁵ Vollebæk was also satisfied, but was already looking ahead towards the implementation of the signed Istanbul Summit Declaration. The "Chechen part" of the declaration ended up thoroughly vague. It "strongly reaffirmed the acknowledgement of Russia's territorial integrity" and condemned "terrorism in all its forms". It underscored the need to respect OSCE norms and measures to improve the humanitarian situation. The signatories agreed that a political solution was essential and that "assistance of the OSCE *would* contribute to achieve that goal." It welcomed the *willingness* of the OSCE to assist in the renewal of political dialogue. It also "welcomed the agreement of the Russian federation to a visit by the Chairman-in-office to the *region*."⁵⁵⁶ The latter part concerned Vollebæk, who didn't see a point of going through with the inspection if he was not allowed into Chechnya itself. Russia's foreign minister Igor Ivanov stated that Vollebæk would be let into Russian controlled territory, because they did not want him to end up as a hostage. Ivanov commented that he did not know if Vollebæk's excursion would take place before New Year and that "we are not in a rush. We will find a time through diplomatic corridors."⁵⁵⁷

RUSSIAN REACTIONS

The diplomatic corridors leading to Chechnya related areas were long, twisted and difficult. In late November 1999, the Russian newspaper *Nezavisimaja Gazeta* reported on what it regarded as Vollebæk's "Chechnya schemes" behind Russia's back, and remarked that Vollebæk's visit to Chechnya as a consequence might not take place.⁵⁵⁸ The article contained facsimiles of two letters, one from Vollebæk to President Maskhadov and the other from Odd Gunnar Skagestad to the President of Ingushetia, asking for help to deliver the letter to Maskhadov. Sigvald Hauge, spokesman for the Norwegian MFA confirmed that there had

⁵⁵⁴ «Jeltsin til OSSE-møte for å forsvare Tsjetsjenia-krigen» [Yeltsin to the OSCE Meeting to Defend the Chechen war], *NTB*, 15.11.1999.

⁵⁵⁵ «Vollebæk til Tsjetsjenia snarest mulig» [Vollebæk to Chechnya as soon as possible], *NTB*, 19.11.1999.

⁵⁵⁶ Istanbul Summit Document, 1999: 50-51, http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1999/11/4050_en.pdf (13.5.2010)

⁵⁵⁷ «Vollebæk til Tsjetsjenia snarest mulig», *NTB*, 19.11.1999.

⁵⁵⁸ «Russisk avis kritiserer Vollebæk» [Russian newspaper criticizes Vollebæk], *NTB*, 27.11.1999.

been a recent correspondence between OSCE chairman Vollebæk and Maskhadov. However, he rejected all accusations of going behind Russia's back.

The first letter from Maskhadov to Vollebæk concerned the humanitarian situation in Chechnya. Vollebæk replied in a letter to Maskhadov. "The Russians have been fully informed on what happened; they have received copies of the letters", Spokesman Hauge told the press that similar reactions had occurred in Moscow before, and that the comment in the *Nezavisimaja Gazeta* could be seen in light of these. The episode took place only days before Vollebæk was supposed to meet with Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov in Moscow.⁵⁵⁹

Years later, Odd Gunnar Skagestad claims that the criticism of Vollebæk in Russian newspapers can be seen as symptomatic of the general view of Russian decision makers at the time, even as a signal from the authorities.⁵⁶⁰ As head of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya, Odd Gunnar Skagestad experienced episodes that showed the impatience Russia had for external involvement. As mentioned, it was not possible to stay in the OSCE office in Grozny, since Russian authorities would not guarantee security.

As Skagestad remained in Moscow, he could still keep daily correspondence with local OSCE representatives and others inside Chechnya that wanted to contact the outside world through the OSCE. Skagestad said that a constant call for help and attention was issued from Chechnya. The least he could do, in Skagestad's opinion, was to forward the information he received on human rights violations and the general situation to the OSCE headquarters.⁵⁶¹

Russian authorities did not have high tolerance Skagestad's correspondence, which they considered outside his mandate. Late autumn 1999 three warnings were issued from Russian authorities. First, Skagestad was called on the carpet by Russian authorities, who told him that they did not approve of his correspondence. At the same time the Russian embassy to Oslo visited the Norwegian MFA and Russian delegates showed up at the head quarters of the OSCE in Vienna expressing their opinion on the matter. After being "carpeted" by Russian authorities, Skagestad made a phone call to the Norwegian MFA to explain the situation, where he was told "not to worry about it".⁵⁶² The Russian's had made their point and the meeting between Ivanov and Vollebæk could take place. Vollebæk's dialogue efforts eventually gave some results, he was promised a visit into Chechnya.

⁵⁵⁹ «Russisk avis kritiserer Vollebæk», *NTB*, 27.11.1999.

⁵⁶⁰ Conversation with Odd Gunnar Skagestad, 15.4.2010.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

EYEWITNESS TO CHECHNYA'S DESTRUCTION

“It is difficult to be optimistic from what we’ve seen here today”.⁵⁶³ As chairman of the OSCE, Vollebæk was “finally” present in Chechnya, after endless attempts to make the Russians let an OSCE observation mission into the warzone. At a hilltop above Grozny he was the first and only Norwegian Foreign Minister who witnessed the conflict. Vollebæk and the rest of the observation group had witnessed grenades being launched and fighting right below them. “What did I find? I found that reality was not quite corresponding with the version presented by the Russians.”⁵⁶⁴ The safe passages that Russia claimed existed for the civilians to flee to neighbouring republics were not safe. Vollebæk saw a bus carrying refugees bombarded by artillery and several people in it was severely hurt.

Earlier on, in December, the civilians of Grozny had been given an ultimatum to leave the city within six hours prior to massive aerial and artillery bombing.⁵⁶⁵ Vollebæk had at the time stated that the ultimatum was totally unacceptable and demanded a 24 hours truce in respect of civilians who sought to escape.⁵⁶⁶ The civilians were given some more time, but were could they go? The Norwegian chairman-in-office cannot have been very pleased with the situation. The observation group was only allowed into areas that were controlled by Russian military, for its own protection according to the Russian. The Russian authorities did not allow the establishment of an OSCE office in Ingushetia. The OSCE field mission sat 1.5 thousand kilometres away, in Moscow.⁵⁶⁷ In addition, they had just barely been allowed into Chechnya to observe the situation. All of the points of the declaration regarding Chechnya in the Istanbul Summit were printed letters on paper, the words would, it seemed, not be brought to life.

CHANGING OF THE GUARDS

On New Years Eve 1999, an elderly Boris Yeltsin in poor health handed over the presidency to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin until elections. Norway was about to see a different Russian leadership with a new attitude. Already as prime minister, Putin had explicitly expressed his desire to restore Russia as an international major power.⁵⁶⁸ His manifesto equated the “renewal

⁵⁶³ «Møtes i dødens svingdør» [Encounters at deaths' revolving door], *Dagbladet*, 17.12.1999

⁵⁶⁴ Phone-interview with Knut Vollebæk, 17.2.2010

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ «Vollebæk ber om mer våpenhvile», [Vollebæk asks for prolonged cease-fire], *NTB*, 13.12.1999; «Krever 24 timers våpenhvile» [Demands 24 hours truce], *Bergens Tidene*, 14.12.1999

⁵⁶⁷ Odd Gunnar Skagestad, «Chechnia – the OSCE Experience 1995-2003», *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 2008, 5: 169.

⁵⁶⁸ Blakkisrud 2009: 223.

of Russia” with restoring Russia’s pride in itself as “strong state power”.⁵⁶⁹ Putin had built a tough image and gained great popularity in Russia because of his handling of the Chechen conflict.⁵⁷⁰ To show his firm support to the Russian soldiers in Chechnya, Putin took on a somewhat alternative Santa Clause role during the New Year’s holiday: He flew a fighter jet to Grozny to personally award hunting knives to the Russian soldiers.⁵⁷¹

Putin’s background was so-called *Siloviki*, or *Chekist*, which refers to the security establishment. Putin was former FSB officer and head of the FSB in 1998-99.⁵⁷² He was formally elected President on 27 March 2001 and made several changes to Russian society in the course of his first year as President.⁵⁷³ He unravelled the asymmetric federalism that had developed under Yeltsin. He forced Tatarstan and other republics to become fully integrated within the Russian federal constitutional and economic space, undoing the privileged status they had won from Yeltsin in 1994.⁵⁷⁴

Putin also imposed state control of the mass media. Pressure for self-censorship was applied to oligarch owners of media and journalists, critical media organizations were closed down, and the circulation of critical print was obstructed. This had widespread consequences for the coverage of the second war in Chechnya. The Kremlin not only employed police action and judicial measures to strictly control the media’s access to Chechnya, in particular foreign media. This was to prevent the kind of negative images that had undermined public support for the first war, but, as showed above, engineered a revolution in media ownership and control in Russia.⁵⁷⁵ With the praise Russian free press and democratic behaviour received by members of the Council of Europe in 1996 in mind, it is possible to see how this changed during the years after Chechnya was de facto independent from Russia.⁵⁷⁶

The new hard-headed leadership did not pass unremarked by Norwegian political commentators.⁵⁷⁷ The turn of attitude in the Russian leadership, and the society as a whole had however been noticed for some time already. Russia’s leading advocate for human rights, Kovaljov had seen the first Russo-Chechen war as the first great battle for democracy in the

⁵⁶⁹ Hughes 2007: 111.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid: 111.

⁵⁷¹ Hughes 2007: 112; Baev 2005: 126.

⁵⁷² Hughes 2007: 107.

⁵⁷³ «Putin seiret i første runde» [Putin, victor of the first round], *Aftenposten*, 27.3.2000.

⁵⁷⁴ Hughes 2007: 123.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid: 123.

⁵⁷⁶ «Solid ja til Russland i Europarådet», *NTB*, 25.1.1996; See page 5, chapter 4.

⁵⁷⁷ «Putin lammer all opposisjon» [Putin paralyzes all opposition], *Dagbladet*, 7.1.2000; «Knytteneve demokraten» [The Fist Democrat], *Aftenposten*, 8.1.2000; «Den politiske arven etter Jeltsin» [The Political Heritage after Yeltsin], *Nordlys*, 22.1.2000; «Putin fester grepet om makten» [Putin tightens his grip around the power], *Aftenposten*, 20.5.2000; «Putin fester grep» [Putin tightens his grip], *VG*, 4.12.2000.

post Soviet Russia. James Hughes claims “that the radicalized military-security interests had been vocal in Russian politics since 1996, and even had widespread political support in the Duma, as was demonstrated by its opposition to the *Khasavyurt treaty* and the peace agreements with Chechnya.”⁵⁷⁸

Foreign Minister Vollebæk had shaken hands with the new regime and personally experienced that it was not a lightweight. Norway had never been as engaged in Chechnya as during Vollebæk’s position as OSCE chairman-in-office. A solid portion of effort had been put into the conflict’s never-within-reach-resolution, both in terms of resources and engagement. Vollebæk had balanced his roles well as OSCE Chairman. He had addressed the humanitarian situation in Chechnya and his concern, however, all the while closely aligned with USA and the EU, receiving much praise for his engagement from those circles. He did not receive much praise from Russian authorities by the end of the year, but he had maintained close dialogue with the Russians, and had not pushed their limits too a great extent – with the exception of the most intense negotiations of the Istanbul Summit. To the people of Chechnya and their situation Norway had – in the end – not made much of a difference.

⁵⁷⁸ Hughes 2007: 108.

6: NORWAY'S POLICY TOWARDS THE SECOND WAR

In Norway the political situation remained the same into the new millennium. As 1999 expired, Vollebæk's position as Chairperson-in-office in OSCE was taken over by Austria's temporary foreign minister, Wolfgang Schüssel, quickly succeeded by foreign minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Nonetheless, Norway's engagement in the OSCE troika continued for another year.⁵⁷⁹ Among Vollebæk's wishes for the New Year was that "even though it may look dark, I hope we will see a political solution in Chechnya, in order to achieve stability."⁵⁸⁰ This chapter will attempt an evaluation of Norwegian foreign policy towards the second Russo-Chechen war after the OSCE engagement, with a light comparative perspective on Norwegian foreign policy towards the first Russo-Chechen war.

WITH BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

In Vollebæk's address on foreign policy to the Norwegian Parliament in January 2000 he expressed great concern about the civilians in Chechnya. He explicitly told the assembly that it was a very difficult situation and that the government were struggling to find the right approach to discourage Russia's behaviour in the North Caucasus.⁵⁸¹ The foreign minister claimed that Norway had contributed to pressurizing Russia to end the war in Chechnya and asserted that it was not acceptable that Russia had launched such massive military power. He continued by stating that Norway obviously recognized Russia's territorial integrity and the right to defend itself against terrorism and added that Norway was not indifferent as to what means Russia utilized.⁵⁸² Nonetheless, he underscored that it was important to keep up dialogue with Russia and contribute to integrate Russia further into Europe.⁵⁸³ There was no divergence between active participation in international cooperation and preservation of national interests, Vollebæk claimed. On the contrary, he perceived that the Norwegian chairmanship in 1999 had strengthened the impression of Norway as a reliable and trustworthy partner in international relations.

Vollebæk himself had become exceedingly popular as diplomat and enjoyed good contact with several of the leaders of the Western governments. Vollebæk may also have been

⁵⁷⁹ «Østerrike overtar formannskapet» [Austria takes over Chairmanship], *NTB*, 1.1.2000.

⁵⁸⁰ «Statsrådenes ønsker for år 2000» [the Ministry official's New Year wishes], *Aftenposten*, 3.1.2000.

⁵⁸¹ Statement to the Parliament on foreign affairs by Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, 20.1.2000, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2000/utenriks-og_sikkerhetspolitiske.html?id=264274 (13.5.2010)

⁵⁸² «Viktig å opprettholde kontakt med Russland» [Important to maintain contact with Russia], *NTB*, 20.1.2000.

⁵⁸³ «Viktig å opprettholde kontakt med Russland», *NTB*, 20.1.2000.

right in his assertion that his engagement had strengthened Norway's image of good efforts in the name of peace and human prosperity. However, what did he achieve in terms of influencing an end, bringing forth negotiations or establishing observation in the second Chechen conflict?

Reviewing OSCE's role in the Russo-Chechen conflict, differences between the two Russo-Chechen wars stands out. Numerous actors, both inside and outside Russia tried to help solve the conflict during the first Chechen war. While the OSCE acted as mediators in the first war, a truce was established and a peace treaty was negotiated forth. In the second conflict, the OSCE and other intergovernmental bodies were more restrained, and journalists were unable to report from the scene of events as they did during the first war.⁵⁸⁴ This means that even though the OSCE, under the leadership of Vollebæk, presumably did its very best, it did not manage to get a permanent foot within Chechnya, because the new Russian regime would not allow external involvement, as the Yeltsin government had at times allowed. Vollebæk remarked on this when asked to look back. He said that Putin had been remarkably resolute and consequent in refusing any external involvement or interference.⁵⁸⁵

Conflict resolution aside, Vollebæk's OSCE engagement had given Norway a unique opportunity to be in the midst of political decision making. However, Norway was still outside the EU and thus not part of important decision making. One of the first things the Norwegian government focused on in 2000 was how to avoid ending up in a political vacuum outside spheres of influence in the EU. The EU was about to establish a common defence and security policy, and Norway did not want to be left out.⁵⁸⁶ Norway also firmly supported the so-called EU-14 sanctions against Austria's government.

The new Austrian coalition government, established in the end of 1999, caused a political storm of criticism all over Europe. One of the two political parties in government, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) was perceived by many outside Austria to be not just a populist party but on the extreme right-wing. Head of the FPÖ, Jörg Haider, had uttered several statements positively referring to the German dictator Adolf Hitler and the Nazi's employment policy.⁵⁸⁷ The EU-14 sanctions lasted for several months and gave Austria a cold shoulder on several diplomatic, economic, and social levels, causing the country thoroughly isolation.⁵⁸⁸ They were terminated after a commission of "three wise men" had examined Austria's

⁵⁸⁴ Cherkasov and Grushkin 2005: 132.

⁵⁸⁵ Phone Interview with Knut Vollebæk, 17.2.2010.

⁵⁸⁶ «EU – et problem som aldri blir borte»[EU – a problem that does not go away], *NTB*, 4.1.2000.

⁵⁸⁷ Paul Luif, «Austria: The Burdens of History», in Jeanne A. K. Hey (ed.), *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy*, London 2003: 106.

⁵⁸⁸ Luif 2003: 106-108.

commitment to “European values”, and found these to be more than adequate, and even above other member’s situation⁵⁸⁹

In addition to the unusual measures, the EU was outspokenly dissatisfied with Austria’s engagement as OSCE chairperson-in-office. The relations were so cold that Austria’s Benita Ferrero-Waldner would reportedly not consult with her predecessor, Vollebæk. European diplomats quoted in Norwegian newspapers said that it was an outrage that there had not been seen peace initiatives towards Chechnya from the OSCE.⁵⁹⁰ During another Middle East Summit, this time in Moscow, on 1 February, the situation in Chechnya had been raised several times, although only informally. Foreign Minister Vollebæk had brought up the subject over dinner with Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov.⁵⁹¹ Vollebæk explained to journalists that:

[w]e have all along made it clear that what is going on in Chechnya is totally unacceptable. But we will not under any circumstance allow Russia to isolate itself. Russia is Norway’s largest neighbour. It is fully possible to maintain a dialogue with those who govern Russia. The goal must be to affect Russia in the direction we want them to move towards.⁵⁹²

Vollebæk gives an apt description of a perception in accordance with a constructivist perspective, which assesses that regional and international norms affects states conduct. The power to define what conduct is legitimate can be considered a structural ideological power. It seems that Norwegian authorities, here represented by Vollebæk, thought that it was possible to affect Russian authority’s minds as to what was considered right and wrong in the Western democracies. Julie Wilhelmsen’s conclusion in the review of the Council of Europe’s approach to the Russo-Chechen conflict shows that Norway shared this perception with others. She states that “the Council of Europe still believes that cooperation and engagement, combined with verbal criticism, with time will have a socializing effect and will change Russia’s perception and practicing of human rights”.⁵⁹³ However, it must be pointed out that this strategy, which had been pursued throughout the 1990s, had not improved the democratic or the human rights situation in Russia.

⁵⁸⁹ Luif 2003: 109-110.

⁵⁹⁰ «Østerrikes nye OSSE-leder inkompetent» [Austria’s new OSCE leader is incompetent], *NTB*, 23.2.2000; «Tiltakene mot Østerrike fortsetter» [Measures against Austria continues], *NTB*, 8.3.2000.

⁵⁹¹ «Stor optimisme etter midtøsten-møte i Moskva» [Great optimism after Middle East meeting in Moscow], *Aftenposten*, 2.2.2000.

⁵⁹² «Stor optimisme etter midtøsten-møte i Moskva», *Aftenposten*, 2.2.2000.

⁵⁹³ Julie Wilhelmsen, «Grove menneskerettighetsbrudd i Tsjetsjenia – en snublestein for Europarådet», *Nordisk Østforum* 2005, 2: 160-161.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SECOND WAR: PUTIN'S TURN OF THE SCREW

The second Russo-Chechen war has been compared to the first as “undoubtedly more brutal.”⁵⁹⁴ Lord Frank Judd, Rapporteur of the Political Committee of the Council of Europe, observation of the state of Chechnya during the second war provided the outside with a glimpse of the situation:

It was April 2000. Together with several colleagues I stood in the middle of Grozny. ... Our group fell totally silent. In all directions the devastation of the city was terrible and total. ... And this was at the beginning of a new millennium in a member state of the Council of Europe with all its commitments to peace, human rights and accountable democratic government. It would have been easy to despair.⁵⁹⁵

The human rights situation was just as bad as Grozny's condition. The *Chechenization* of the war, the deliberate use of Chechens to lead counterinsurgency, had an increasingly severe effect on the civil society. In addition to the same indiscriminate use of violence as performed by Russian troops, the proxies often caused cycles of revenge attacks and killings that would be launched against them and their relatives. The pattern of “dirty war” with war crimes perpetrated by poorly disciplined and brutalized troops on both sides was also a characteristic of both the first and the second war. From early on in the second war, the Russian military used overwhelmingly reckless force against armed resistance in civilian areas.⁵⁹⁶ “In absence of support from the civilian population, Russian forces employed torture systematically in attempt to extract intelligence.”⁵⁹⁷ Thousands of suspects were held in “filtration” or internment camps.⁵⁹⁸ There are in addition well-documented cases of massacres of civilians in towns and villages committed by Russian forces in late 1999. The commander of the involved forces, General Shamanov, was, seemingly subsequently, awarded the medal “Hero of Russia” by President Putin.⁵⁹⁹

War is said to be the toughest test of any state's ability to observe human rights obligations.⁶⁰⁰ The conduct of Russian authorities in Chechnya completely opposed the criteria of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which not only demands that a state's authorities refrain from the use of torture, but moreover demand that they actively take

⁵⁹⁴ Cherkasov and Grushkin 2005: 132.

⁵⁹⁵ Lord Frank Judd, «Afterword», in Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London 2005: 289.

⁵⁹⁶ Hughes 2007: 120.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid: 119.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid: 119.

⁵⁹⁹ Hughes 2007: 120; «Russiske overgrep dokumentert i rapport» [Russian violations documented in report], *Aftenposten*, 17.9.2001.

⁶⁰⁰ Wilhelmsen 2005: 160-161

preconditions to avoid torture and punish violations.⁶⁰¹ What behaviour Vladimir Putin's personal comments about Chechen fighters encouraged among Russian soldiers is hard to say, but the comments such as "waste them in the shit house" and "strangle the vermin at the root" did not encourage mild treatment.⁶⁰²

CONTINUED OSCE ENGAGEMENT FROM A NORWEGIAN PERSPECTIVE

The new OSCE chairperson-in-office, Austrian Benita Ferrero, was at this point constantly under political attack for allegedly not doing enough to ease the situation in Chechnya.⁶⁰³ This can however be regarded in light of how Austria was treated in general in this period of the EU-14 sanctions. The Norwegian newspapers had probably given Vollebæk disproportionate attention compared to what they in turn gave his unpopular successor, Austrian Ferrero. With this in mind, it nonetheless seems as some of the international engagement was cooled down and became less active in Chechnya from 2000 and onward. This is also confirmed by other material on the OSCE engagement. On 21 January 2000 the OSCE troika held a meeting where, among other issues, Chechnya was discussed. Vollebæk claimed that they had received signals from Russia that OSCE still had a part to play in Chechnya. As for Norway, the high profile the OSCE engagement had received in Norway during Vollebæk's leadership was not as high anymore. The media reported significantly less on OSCE related material, but moreover the engagement of the Norwegian government changed with a *new* government.

The Labour government Stoltenberg I that succeeded the Bondevik I government on 17 March 2000 took on a more pragmatic foreign policy *profile* than its predecessor:

The main goal of our foreign policy is to secure Norwegian interests foremost in our own region. When we nonetheless are so deeply engaged in other parts of the world, both through development aid, contributions to peace, reconciliation and human rights it is due to our duty to make an effort for others, and a conviction that through such efforts we also secure our own long term interests.⁶⁰⁴

This change of profile was also true in the character of the new foreign minister himself: Thorbjørn Jagland, Labour Party veteran and leader took over the post as foreign minister,

⁶⁰¹ Wilhelmsen 2005: 151-170: 151

⁶⁰² Hughes 2007: 112; Evangelista 2002: 75.

⁶⁰³ «Østerrikes nye OSSE leder incompetent», *NTB*, 23.2.2000.

⁶⁰⁴ [”Hovedmålsettingen med vår utenrikspolitikk er å sikre norske interesser først og fremst i våre nærområder. Når vi likevel er så dypt engasjert i andre deler av verden, både gjennom utviklingsarbeid, innsats for fred, forsoning og menneskerettigheter, skyldes dette at vi har en plikt til å gjøre noe for andre og en tro på at vi gjennom en slik innsats også sikrer våre egne langsiktige interesser.”], Statement to the Parliament on Foreign Policy by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 20.3.2001, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2001/utenriksminister_thorbjorn_jaglands.html?id=264645 (13.5.2010)

although after some seemingly superficial public debate on whether he was suited for the position.⁶⁰⁵

In late March 2000 the Norwegian Helsinki Committee called out that Norway should make complaint to the International Court for Human Rights against Russia because of the violations in Chechnya.⁶⁰⁶ This was not going to happen. Chechnya was, as far as it is possible to observe, not on top of foreign minister Jagland's list of priorities.

To the OSCE Chechnya came second to Kosovo. A Norwegian diplomat who had held a central position in the work with the Chechen conflict told the media how important it was not to drop the matter.⁶⁰⁷ The humanitarian situation was severe he said, and he perceived the consequences would become grave for the entire North Caucasian region if a political solution could not be found.⁶⁰⁸ Espen Barth Eide, State Secretary to Foreign Minister Jagland, defended in June 2000 Chairman Ferrero's work and claimed she was "fairly active" and that she kept putting pressure on Russia over Chechnya.⁶⁰⁹ State Secretary Bart Eide had been sent as stand-in for foreign minister Jagland to the OSCE troika meeting with Austria and Romania. Bart Eide stated that the OSCE wanted to return to Chechnya as soon as possible, but "we can't let Russia dictate the terms".⁶¹⁰ He added that "we don't want to be hostages in there."⁶¹¹

The OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya was not hostages. They were, however, paralyzed and unable to perform their mission. The establishment of OSCE presence with an office in Znamenskoe in northern Chechnya dragged out. The two basic prerequisites for the establishment, defining the status of the OSCE mission group and Russian safeguard of security had not been fulfilled. This was apparently due to Russian authority's reluctance or inability to provide the necessary security arrangements.⁶¹² Finally, in June 2000, an agreement between Russian authorities and the OSCE reopened the Znamenskoe office, after two years without being present. The Assistance Group, as the only independent field presence of international organizations in Chechnya, ceased to exist at the end of 2002.⁶¹³

On 31 October 2000 foreign minister Jagland made a statement to Parliament on the Norwegian OSCE engagement: "The conflicts enhance the basic fact that it is foremost the

⁶⁰⁵ «Ønsket kandidat»[Wanted candidate], *Dagens Næringsliv*, 16.3.2000.

⁶⁰⁶ «Russland bør klages for menneskerettsdomstolen» [Russia should be complained to the ECHR], *NTB*, 31.3.2000.

⁶⁰⁷ «Osse lammet i Tsjetsjenia»[OSCE paralyzed in Chechnya], *Dagbladet*, 16.7.2000.

⁶⁰⁸ «Osse lammet i Tsjetsjenia», *Dagbladet*, 16.7.2000.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Skagestad 2008: 170.

⁶¹³ Ibid: 170.

parts' willingness to find a peaceful solution that is decisive. It serves no end to force political solutions, which the parts are not interested in."⁶¹⁴ He did not linger on the fact that Maskhadov time and again had tried to contact Russian authorities for negotiations, and was repeatedly brushed off as terrorist. Nor did he take into account that Russia had completely crippled OSCE's functionality in Chechnya. Nor did he mention that most of the declarations regarding Chechnya and Russia were being overruled by Russian authorities. There were already disagreements between Western European diplomats and Russian authorities on what the declaration actually stated.⁶¹⁵ At the OSCE summit meeting in Vienna 27-28 November 2000 the Russian delegation torpedoed, according to OSCE Chairperson Ferrero, the summit declaration of the 55 foreign ministers because of Chechnya, Georgia and Moldova.⁶¹⁶ A planned declaration on the protection of children's rights in war zones was also rejected, with Russian as the only objector.⁶¹⁷

Foreign Minister Jagland expressed his disappointment over the fact that the summit did not result in a declaration. He did not put the blame on anyone specific, but stated that some of the problems could probably have been sorted out before the summit meeting: "Perhaps the problems have grown bigger since the Istanbul summit and harder to pursue."⁶¹⁸ Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov rejected the criticism directed at Russia in Vienna. He claimed that OSCE could not narrow its *raison d'être* down to human rights and crisis management, because that would damage European cooperation and security in a long term perspective.⁶¹⁹

RUSSIA AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE INTO THE RING FOR A SECOND ROUND

The humanitarian situation in Chechnya, however, also concerned other international organizations. In April 2000, the Human Rights commission passed a resolution in favour of an EU motion criticizing Russia "for disproportionate and indiscriminate use of military force, particularly against civilians".⁶²⁰ "At the same time, the Council of Europe's parliamentary Assembly (PACE) suspended Russia's voting rights for its part in the Chechen conflict, although its membership was restored in January 2001 after Russia declared the war officially

⁶¹⁴ Statement to the Parliament on the Norwegian OSCE engagement by foreign minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 31.10.2000 [Konfliktene fremhevet det grunnleggende faktum at det først og fremst partenes vilje til å finne fredelige løsninger som er avgjørende. Det har ingen hensikt å påtvinge partene politiske løsninger de selv ikke ønsker.], http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2000/om_samarbeidet_i_organisasjonen.html?id=264226 (13.5.2010)

⁶¹⁵ «Russland torpederte OSSE-erklæring» [Russia torpedoed OSCE Summit Declaration], *NTB*, 28.11.2000.

⁶¹⁶ «Russland torpederte OSSE-erklæring», *NTB*, 28.11.2000.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Bowker 2005: 231.

over.”⁶²¹ Nevertheless, months after the war was declared over by Putin, the battles were still raging in Chechnya. The question of whether to suspend Russia from the Council on a permanent basis was brought up, but none of the foreign ministers of the member states supported this suggestion in May 2000, because it was perceived that it would only have negative consequences.⁶²² One Norwegian newspaper article was found covering the possible expulsion of Russia from the Council of Europe. No statements by Jagland on this issue were obtainable.

Facing – and probably discomforted – by Russia's increasingly tougher language and lack of amenability to reason, the Council of Europe maintained its criticism of human rights violations, but did not apply stronger measures.⁶²³ Wilhelmsen claims this soft approach has undermined the credibility of the Council of Europe as its demands of compliance with membership criteria were not observed, and the soft approach thus also undermined the legitimacy of the Council's norms.⁶²⁴

Despite the increasing verbal criticism towards Russia in 2000, Russia's continued violations did not have any consequences. Both EU and USA were careful not to follow up the criticism with political measures or sanctions. Solid efforts were made to stabilize the relations with Russia. EU had along with other supportive countries, such as Norway since January, showed that they were not unfamiliar with the use of sanctions. Austria had been thoroughly sanctioned on several levels of boycott and isolation for months.⁶²⁵

It was commented that double standards were obvious when comparing the EU-14 sanctions against Austria and the “free-to-go” responses towards Russia. Vollebæk claimed the opposite in a response to this accusation. He felt that EU's response towards Austria showed that the EU took its own members' conduct just as serious as external states'.⁶²⁶ Examining Austria's foreign policy in a small state perspective, Paul Luif, claims that “Austria's partners would have thought twice before introducing these unusual measures against a bigger country.”⁶²⁷

Foreign minister Jagland had also supported the sanctions against Austria, and he had supported the military sanctions against Kosovo: the Serbian violations of human rights. He seemingly was spared what could have had become an uncomfortable situation when the

⁶²¹ Bowker 2005: 231.

⁶²² «Russland ikke utestengt fra Europarådet» [Russia not expelled from the Council of Europe], *NTB*, 11.5.2000

⁶²³ Wilhelmsen 2005: 167

⁶²⁴ Ibid: 167.

⁶²⁵ Luif 2003: 106-109.

⁶²⁶ «Tiltakene mot Østerrike forsetter», *NTB*, 8.3.2000.

⁶²⁷ Luif 2005: 111.

Ministerial Assembly of the Council of Europe voted on Russia's continued membership within the Council of Europe. However, Jagland could vote as all the minister's did in favour of Russian membership.⁶²⁸

It has often been maintained that the Russo-Chechen conflict, as many other conflicts, was overshadowed by the events of 9/11, and that the terror attack was "solid gold" for Putin's struggle to legitimize his efforts.⁶²⁹ The terror attacks of 11 September 2001 caused tremendous fear throughout the Western World and are often regarded as an incident that led international politics into a new paradigm. Foreign minister Jagland seemed convinced of this three weeks after the attacks: "It should be no doubt that what we have witnessed in New York and Washington will bear with it a breaking point in American and international politics."⁶³⁰ This might be correct, but the interesting question in this regard is whether Norwegian leaders' rhetoric and approach towards the Russo-Chechen conflict became subdued before or after 9/11? I will argue that a postulated watershed appeared before. The changes in Russia with Putin's hard headed style as head of state, and his launching of a second brutal "campaign against terror", can be seen as more paramount to this thesis than can 9/11.

JAGLAND AND CHECHNYA

Perusing statements, speeches and newspaper articles on Jagland as foreign minister, he rarely mentioned Chechnya. This is also true in reviewing the Stoltenberg I government as a whole. Compared to the general level of attention Chechnya received by the Stoltenberg I government's predecessors, Jagland's silence on Chechnya spoke for itself, as will be shown below. The silence of the new government toward the situation in Chechnya became an even bigger contrast in light of the fact that Vollebæk had almost (diplomatically) begged, every week over several months before New Year, to enter the Chechen warzone.

As Jagland was about to become new foreign minister in March it was said that "with Jagland as foreign minister the modest Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs would probably spend less time on solving problems Norway does not have."⁶³¹ In the new government's initial

⁶²⁸ «Jaglands dilemma» [Jagland's Dilemma], *VG*, 12.4.2000.

⁶²⁹ «Russland utnytter situasjonen» [Russia takes advantage of the situation], *Aftenposten*, 17.9.2001; ; Hughes 2007: 131.

⁶³⁰ Thorbjørn Jagland, «Terror anslagene mot USA-et tidsskille i international politikk» [The Terror onslaughts at USA- a Watershed in International Politics], speech held at the Oslo Militære Samfund 1.10.2000, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2001/terroranslagene_mot_usa_-et_tidsskille.html?id=265064 (13.5.2010)

⁶³¹ «Ønsket kandidat», *Dagens Næringsliv*, 16.3.2000.

declaration it was stated that a more positive approach to the EU and further development of the cooperation with Russia must be considered that most important foreign political tasks.⁶³²

In a meeting with Javier Solana, coordinator of the EU foreign policy, in April 2000 Jagland explicitly stated that: "It is important to maintain a solid pressure on Russia over Chechnya".⁶³³ In autumn, during the Parliament's *Oral Question Hour*, Jagland was questioned about Norway's policy towards Chechnya. Parliament member Ingvald Godal, Conservative, asked: "in regards of Russia's lack of response to the 25 April 2000 UN resolution on the conflict, the human rights organization Human Rights Watch has asked UN member countries to condemn Russia's non-compliance. How will the government follow up the matter?"⁶³⁴

Jagland replied that the government shared the concern that had been expressed: "We have addressed the situation in Chechnya in several international forums, among them, in OSCE, Council of Europe and UN. Norway took part in making the motion in question, which sought to have special UN *rapportours* in Chechnya. Norway will await their reports before reviewing the situation," Jagland said. The foreign minister continued by stating that the OSCE chairmanship had given Norway opportunity to play an active role in the international efforts to promote a political solution, improve the human rights situation and to ease the human suffering in the area. "In power of our continued place in the OSCE chairmanship, we have been able to take active part in these efforts also this year", Jagland added.⁶³⁵ He stated that the engagement to deter the human rights abuses in Chechnya was not limited to multinational forums. "The situation in Chechnya has been discussed with the Russian on several occasions, most recently during Prime Minister Kasianov's visit in Norway in the end of September. We will continue to address the human rights situation in Chechnya as long as it is reason to do so."⁶³⁶

On 3 April foreign minister Jagland had his chance to address this situation when he, as the first Norwegian, held the main statement at the 56th annual session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, in Geneva. According to the Press Release of the MFA, Jagland had confronted the practice of death penalty. He had also suggested that mechanisms should be

⁶³² Statement to the Parliament on Security and Foreign Policy by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 3.10.2000

⁶³³ «Ingen nye EU-utspill overfor Norge i sikkerhetspolitikken» [No new EU-initiatives on security policy towards Norway], *NTB*, 14.4.2000.

⁶³⁴ Parliament's Oral Question Hour, Question 3, 15.11.2000, <http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2000-2001/001115/ordinarsporretime/3/> (13.5.2010)

⁶³⁵ Parliament's Oral Question Hour, Question 3, 15.11.2000.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

established to help protect human rights advocates and workers all over the world.⁶³⁷ However, Jagland was thoroughly criticised the following days for being “too polite” in his address. Reportedly the Norwegian foreign minister had not mentioned any specific countries and their human rights violations. “Jagland treads wearily, the statement is very general”, remarked Bjørn Engesland from the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. Petter Eide, from Amnesty Norway stated that if Norway wants more authority as peace maker this was a failed strategy. “He should have mentioned the Middle East, he should have mentioned Russia’s violations in Chechnya and he should have addressed the difficult human rights situation in China”, Engesland added.⁶³⁸

“This is very unfortunate”, said Eide, he described what he perceived as a general negative development where none of the Commissions members wanted to criticize each other. Eide considered the entire purpose of the Commission, which was to protect and promote human rights in all of the world’s countries, was undermined.⁶³⁹

In foreign minister Jagland’s statement on foreign affairs on 20 March 2001 he covered several areas regarding Russia, but Chechnya remained absent. He began by stating that: “[t]he Russo-Norwegian relations are good, nonetheless have we noticed the last year that Russia is still a challenging partner. In the bilateral relationship and in the High North we are facing a more self-conscious Russia.” It was not unnatural that Norway and Russia had different views and interests in certain questions, he said. However, what caused him some concern was that Russia, according to Jagland, partially were retrieving old patterns of reaction and conduct, especially on matters of common interest in the High North.⁶⁴⁰ He continued by arguing that Russian politics at the time had to be characterized as undecided and that, the Norwegian willingness to cooperate and the accommodating attitude interchanged with criticism, Jagland stated.⁶⁴¹

He further mentioned several issues of concern: The Barents Sea cooperation and people-to-people-cooperation in the High North, the cooperation on fishing resources, and securing the region’s nuclear waste among others. He also spoke of the potential future cooperation on the enormous energy resources in the region. However, energy related issues were according to Jagland dependant on a solution and an agreement on the bilateral maritime

⁶³⁷ Press Release from the Norwegian MFA, no. 30/00, 3.4.2000, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Nyheter-og-pressemeldinger/2000/utenrikminister_jagland_tar_oppgjor.html?id=242432 (13.5.2010)

⁶³⁸ «Jagland i FN’s Menneskerettighetskommisjon: Til kamp mot dødstraff» [Jagland in the UN Commission for Human Rights: To Battle against Death Penalty], Aftenposten, 30.3.2001.

⁶³⁹ «Jagland i FN’s Menneskerettighetskommisjon: Til kamp mot dødstraff», Aftenposten, 30.3.2001.

⁶⁴⁰ Statement to the Parliament on Foreign Affairs, by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 20.3.2001.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

delimitation.⁶⁴² Jagland did not mention the situation in Chechnya, neither did he mention the increasing criticism regarding human rights violations and Putin's muffling of Press freedom.

Almost a year prior, in April 2000 Jagland had exclaimed that: "[t]his is a breakthrough in the international work for human rights." The foreign minister was commenting on the UN resolution for the protection of human rights activists all over the world. According to Jagland the resolution was promoted by Norway, and the human rights commission asked UN Secretary General to appoint a special representative who could focus on States' violations against those who work to promote human rights. "It is with great satisfaction that I can now establish that we have received huge support on this", Jagland said, and added that no country had voted against the resolution. At the heart of this resolution were the violations, which persons who work with human rights had been subjected to at the hands of authorities in several countries.⁶⁴³

However, by January 2001 this activist engagement had not become observable: "It is curious that Norway, who is usually concerned with freedom of speech and human rights, does not utter one word about the muffling of Press freedom in Russia", commented Beate Slydal, Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression (NFFE) advisor.⁶⁴⁴ The NFFE is part of an international network that closely supervises the development in Russia. Slydal claimed that several signs indicated that Russia was increasingly using methods of the past: A mixture of legal tricks and mafia methods. The law was being used as means of power, and entirely criminal methods were to a larger degree than before used to "shut people's mouth", Slydal purported.⁶⁴⁵

She stated that Russia was accustomed to power struggles and leaders that have not had scruples about "getting people out of the way".⁶⁴⁶ The threshold, she continued, for making use of such methods was low. She claimed that the economical reforms in Russia have caused the Russian people such problems that it has undermined people's confidence in an open society. She thought the frustrations dammed up in the Russian society to be something a leader could use to own advantage. A strong figure could be alluring, and people would be willing to take less notice of the dark side, she added.⁶⁴⁷

Why did not the Western governments protest, as they had done regarding dissidents in the Soviet Union? Slydal's answer was that Western politicians had been of the conviction that

⁶⁴² Statement to the Parliament on Foreign Affairs, by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 20.3.2001.

⁶⁴³ «Utenriksminister Jagland: -Et gjennombrudd for det internasjonale menneskerettighetsarbeidet », Press release from the Norwegian MFA, No. 40/2000, 26.4.2000

⁶⁴⁴ «Norge tier om Putins undertrykkelse» [Norway is silent on Putin's suppression], *NTB*, 25.1.2001

⁶⁴⁵ «Norge tier om Putins undertrykkelse», *NTB*, 25.1.2001.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

a liberal economy with time would equal a liberal society. She was curious about why Norway's government had not spoken up: "it is our large neighbour in the east, and we are usually otherwise concerned with issues that affect us: nuclear security and social decay. But not Press freedom, even though this is an area that we ordinarily are concerned with around the globe."⁶⁴⁸

In Jagland's statement on foreign affairs two months later, he stated that Russia was in the midst of an extensive reforming process: "It is in our obvious interest that Russia succeeds in consolidating democracy and developing a sustainable economy." To what extent the development will continue in this direction was up to Russia, however, he added that as neighbour country and together with Norway's partners in Europe and North America Norway could provide important contributions.⁶⁴⁹ This way of verbally establishing the status quo in Russo-Norwegian relations had remained the same throughout three governments. It seems as the Jagland government were of same perception as its predecessors: Russia had to be influenced and affected into the right direction. This did seemingly no longer included public condemnation of Russian violations of human rights in Chechnya.

SPACES OF EXCEPTION

Norway was not alone in what was seemingly a general easy-going tendency towards Russia. Professor James Hughes finds it ironic that along with the increase of reports on the grave humanitarian situation, the "international criticism has become somewhat formulaic." Hughes sees this in light of how Western governments themselves have become focal point of human rights activists. Due to human rights organizations criticism of Western governments' "counterinsurgency practices in Afghanistan and Iraq, and over the erosion of democracy their influence over policy makers, and the media has declined."⁶⁵⁰ Matthew Evangelista, professor of government and director of the Peace studies Program at Cornell University, claims that "in recent years people of the West, particularly the United States, have appeared to believe that the lives of civilians in enemy countries –or even countries that are target of 'humanitarian intervention' are worth less than the lives of their own countries soldiers."⁶⁵¹ Are Chechens worth less than other Russians - or Europeans - in the eyes of Russian and Western decision makers? Evangelista argues that there is evidence that Russian authorities sought to promote this belief in their dealings with Chechnya. Even though their military actions allegedly was

⁶⁴⁸ «Norge tier om Putins undertrykkelse», *NTB*, 25.1.2001

⁶⁴⁹ Statement to the Parliament on Foreign Affairs, by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 20.3.2001.

⁶⁵⁰ Hughes 2007: 135.

⁶⁵¹ Evangelista 2002: 169.

conducted to keep Chechens within the federation, it was fought in a way as if the civilians in Chechnya was expendable compared to those of Russian soldiers.⁶⁵² Referring to war rumours, Prime Minister Putin said that the Russian leadership would never allow a replay of the 1994-96 Chechen war, because it would lead to unnecessary casualties among the troops, he did not mention Chechen and Russian civilians⁶⁵³

It is claimed that Russian authorities sought to place the massive human rights violation outside both federal and international law in both wars.⁶⁵⁴ A number of influential Western observers of the situation of Chechnya have, according to Evangelista, come to accept that a country is allowed, or even obliged, to protect its soldiers first, even at the expense of killing innocent civilians.⁶⁵⁵ Professor of Geography Derek Gregory has used Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's ideas to explain how Western authorities have managed to place people in Afghanistan outside international legislation and moral perception.

Gregory uses Agamben's thoughts of how a political community is turned not on inclusion or belonging but on *exclusion*. Gregory's argument is, in his own words: "highly abstract philosophico-historical." Agamben's thinking is based on terms from Roman law, foremost *Homo Sacer*, who was someone who fell outside both divine and judicial law. *Homo Sacer* could be killed because he was of no value to his contemporaries, marked as outcast. Gregory states that what matters is not only those who are marginalized, but even more, those who are placed beyond the margins, the exceptions. Agamben connected this exceptional position with political theorist Carl Schmitt's key claim: "He is sovereign he who decides the exception." These *Homines Sacri* are thus included as the objects of sovereign power but excluded from being its subjects. Agamben calls them "mute bearers of life" deprived of language and the political life that language makes possible and placed in spaces of exception.

Giving names to the Chechen insurgents such as terrorists, bandits and criminals was to remove the Chechen separatists' legitimate cause, and instead legitimize the "sound" efforts to remove such disturbing elements. Especially President Putin used extremely brutal language, so called *Fenya*- slang of the criminal world- when he talked about fighting Chechen insurgents, as showed above.⁶⁵⁶ Putin stated that "Chechnya was 'a platform for the expansion of terrorism into Russia', a 'bandit enclave' for foreign-funded 'Islamic terrorists', a 'medieval

⁶⁵² Evangelista 2002: 169.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.: 69.

⁶⁵⁴ Cherkasov and Grushkin 2005: 132.

⁶⁵⁵ Evangelista 2002: 169.

⁶⁵⁶ «Life with an idiot», *The Russia Journal*, 26.3.2000, <http://www.russiajournal.com/node/2857> (13.5.2010)

world'.⁶⁵⁷ This goes to the core of power of ideas. As Russian authorities managed to make Chechnya, in the words of Agamben, a "space of exception" and Chechens "mute bearers of life" alongside what Western governments has done in Afghanistan and Iraq, intentionally and not, it was easier as Professor Evangelista states above, for the Norwegian government and others to accept what was going on.

NORWAY - A TAG-ALONG IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL?⁶⁵⁸

There were also other, more tangible factors that could be considered to affect Norway's policy towards the situation in Chechnya: If we backtrack to February 2000, Norway had been given a key position between Russia and NATO. Norway was leading a troika, consisting of Norway's Ambassador Jakken Bjørn Lian, NATO's Secretary General Lord Robertson and the leader of Russia's Security Council Sergei Ivanov and would work to get the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council back on its feet. Spokesmen of both Russia and NATO expressed that they wanted the relations re-established despite of diverging opinions on several matters.⁶⁵⁹ After the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 it was commented that the struggle against international terrorism had brought Russia and NATO closer than ever since the dissolution of the USSR. After a meeting in NATO's headquarters outside Brussels on 26 September 2001, NATO's Secretary General Robertson referred to Russia's foreign minister Ivanov as a "friend", and emphasized the importance of the Russo-NATO relations. When asked if they had discussed the war in Chechnya, Robertson denied that it had been discussed in detail. However, he remarked that Russia were entitled to defend its territory from attacks "from that part of the world", although he added that the response had to be proportional to the attack, and follow the rules of International law.⁶⁶⁰ "There will still be disagreements between NATO and Russia on those kind of matters", said Robertson, "but there are more that unites us than separates us", he ended.⁶⁶¹

Norway's candidacy to the UN Security Council had been one of the four highest priorities to the Stoltenberg I government, and could also be considered one of these factors.

⁶⁵⁷ Hughes 2007: 112.

⁶⁵⁸ «Norge - en 'rævdilter' i Sikkerhetsrådet?», Statement to Bergen's Student Society on Norway's membership in the UN Security Council by State Secretary Raymond Johansen, 5.4.2001, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2001/norge_-en_raevdilter_i_sikkerhetsradet.html?id=265230 (13.5.2010)

⁶⁵⁹ «Norge i nøkkelrolle i samarbeidet NATO-Russland» [Norway in key position in the NATO-Russian cooperation], *NTB*, 17.2.2000.

⁶⁶⁰ «Tsjetsjenia kritikken tilhører fortiden i NATO» [Chechnya criticism belongs to the past in NATO], *Aftenposten*, 27.9.2001.

⁶⁶¹ «Tsjetsjenia kritikken tilhører fortiden i NATO» [Chechnya criticism belongs to the past in NATO], *Aftenposten*, 27.9.2001.

After two years of competing against Ireland and Italy, Norway eventually won forth with its candidacy and was elected into the UN Security Council on 10 October 2000, formally taking its seat on 1 January 2001.⁶⁶² When Jagland, a few days after the news of the membership admission, held a statement on Norway's membership in the Security Council he précised that this would be a task the government would attribute highest priority.⁶⁶³ However, he added that Norway had to be level-headed and realistic about the possibilities to influence the Council's decisions.

As the Norwegian membership in the UN Security Council went into its sixth month, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee wrote an article about the "hidden veto" in the Security Council, concerning Chechnya. USA, China and Russia made it impossible to discuss conflicts they recognized as within their own spheres of interest. The other members did not want to try to bring up the conflicts, because they knew forehand that one of the permanent members would use its veto right. The great power's "hidden veto" hindered several conflicts that concerned the Security Council's mandate from even being discussed. The most obvious of these "touchy" conflicts was according to Anne Marit Austbø, Chechnya.⁶⁶⁴

The author focused on Norway's part in the Security Council. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had, according to the authors, presented the focus on human rights in UN mandates for peacekeeping mission as the best way for Norway to promote human rights in the UN Security Council. Norwegian authorities had, apart from that, no clear strategy as to how Norway could promote human rights within the work of the Security Council. Nor had Norwegian authorities commented on how the Security Council should relate to human rights.⁶⁶⁵

In his statement on foreign affairs March 2001, Jagland stressed that the five permanent members – USA, Russia, China, Great Britain and France – in effect affected the Council's efforts more than the rest of the members. This was, he said, not only due to their veto right, but also the experience those five had accumulated throughout many years of work in the Council. Although, there were according to Jagland, no doubt that also non-permanent members had the possibility to influence decisions with *their* views, by the help of solid skills based on insight and experience and good diplomacy.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶² «Norge valgt inn i Sikkerhetsrådet», Press Release from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10.10.2000

⁶⁶³ Statement to the Parliament on Norway's membership in the UN Security Council by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 14.11.2000

⁶⁶⁴ Anne Marit Austbø, «Norske initiativer i Sikkerhetsrådet» [Norwegian initiative in the UN Security Council], *NY TID*, 15.6.2001

⁶⁶⁵ Anne Marit Austbø, «Norske initiativer i Sikkerhetsrådet», *NY TID*, 15.6.2001

⁶⁶⁶ Statement to the Parliament on Norway's membership in the UN Security Council by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 14.11.2000

According to the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, the Security Council had earlier passed several resolutions, where conflicts with severe human rights violations had been defined as threats against international peace and security. These had also included internal conflicts. These resolutions had been passed in the early 1990s. The UN Security Council is the only UN organ that can pass binding decrees and enforce military or peacekeeping operations. When the Security Council had engaged with conflicts in Haiti, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia and other places it was, according to Austbø, interpreted as a sign of the international will to react against human rights violations.⁶⁶⁷

The optimism from the early 1990s had become increasingly toned down. Foremost because the Security Council had not been consequent in addressing conflicts with grave human rights violations. The UN Human Rights Commission had passed several resolutions condemning the human rights violations in Chechnya. The Norwegian Helsinki Committee encouraged the Norwegian government to pursue this and address the situation in Chechnya in the Security Council.⁶⁶⁸

Austbø argued that the human rights- and humanitarian catastrophe in Chechnya was not an internal Russian affair, but a threat to the security and stability in the whole Caucasus. Austbø claimed that it was not unheard of that even though anticipated that one of the permanent members would use its veto, conflicts had been brought up nevertheless. This had at times been done by political and strategic reasons, but also to pressure a member to change its policy. Austbø gave two reasons to argue why this was a measure Norway should exercise as a member of the Security Council. First, it could be effective as one of several measures to promote human rights in certain conflicts. Second, it undermined the legitimacy of the Security Council and thereby the UN when discussions on human rights violations was consequently avoided because of great powers' hidden veto.⁶⁶⁹

To place the conflict in Chechnya on the agenda would have been a step in the opposite direction, she claimed. Such an initiative would have had political costs, and it might have infringed on the bridge building part Norway often played in international forums. Nonetheless, Norway's important contribution could have been to promote a more consistent UN Security Council treatment of conflicts with human rights violations of such dimensions and character

⁶⁶⁷ Anne Marit Austbø, «Norske initiativer i Sikkerhetsrådet», *NY TID*, 15.6.2001

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

that it threatens international peace and security. Such an initiative would have strengthened Norway's legitimacy and credibility as a human rights advocate.⁶⁷⁰

Because of the membership in the Security Council, the UN-dimension had become extra important in Norwegian relations with Russia, Jagland had commented in his statement on 20 March 2001. The permanent membership in the Security Council had become a main pillar in Russian foreign policy. Norway's membership in the Security Council had become an important meeting place between Norway and Russia, foreign minister Jagland stated, and the government had already experienced that it saw eye to eye with Russia on several questions. "Our membership in the Security Council will consequently also contribute to strengthen our relations with Russia."⁶⁷¹

The Foreign Minister had established three areas of Norwegian priority in the Security Council: First, he wanted to focus on the underlying causes of conflict and war - such as poverty, underdevelopment, disparity, and suppression. Second, the government sought to contribute to strengthen UN's ability to plan and carry out peace operations. Third, Norway wanted to place a distinct focus on Africa's challenges.⁶⁷² The continent of Africa had indeed many pressing issues to be dealt with. It was in addition less sensitive than internal conflicts within the state borders of permanent members.

"THE SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE MUST CEASE"⁶⁷³

Already by the end of 2000, a call for more Norwegian criticism against Russia appeared in the media. In a letter to foreign minister Jagland, Amnesty International, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and Islamic Council Norway called for more engagement towards the situation in Chechnya.⁶⁷⁴ They suggested that Norway should use its newly achieved membership in the UN Security Council to focus on the Russo-Chechen war. During the presentation of Norway's candidacy, Norway had promised to promote humanitarian law, transparency and responsibility among the UN members. For this to be something more than just words, Norway should publicly direct demands towards Russia, the letter purported.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷⁰ Anne Marit Austbø, «Norske initiativer i Sikkerhetsrådet», *NY TID*, 15.6.2001

⁶⁷¹ Statement to the Parliament on Foreign Affairs, by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 20.3.2001.

⁶⁷² «Norge - en 'ræv-dilter' i Sikkerhetsrådet?», Statement to Bergen's Student Society on Norway's membership in the UN Security Council by Raymond Johansen, 5.4.2001

⁶⁷³ «Dyster rapport»[Sombre report], *Klassekampen*, 31.5.2001

⁶⁷⁴ «Ber Norge fokusere på Tsjetsjenia i Sikkerhetsrådet»[Requests Norway to focus on Chechnya in the Security Council], *NTB*, 8.12.2000

⁶⁷⁵ «Ber Norge fokusere på Tsjetsjenia i Sikkerhetsrådet», *NTB*, 8.12.2000

In May 2000 Amnesty International's annual report on human rights, the "world's worst grade book" triggered the media's attention to Chechnya once more. Amnesty claimed that 2000 had been a year of recession in regards of human rights in Russia, and Chechnya saw the worst of it. Russia was recognized among the "bullies" along with Sierra Leone, Israel, Columbia, Serbia, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Zimbabwe and China.⁶⁷⁶ Even though authorities are familiar with the use of human rights rhetoric, the violations continue, claimed Petter Eide, Secretary General of Amnesty International Norway.⁶⁷⁷ Petter Eide's example illustrates how important public diplomacy had become throughout the world. Governments and regimes all over the world talked the language of human rights, but their conduct towards groups within their own nations were often non-compliant with their words. The public and international emphasis may also have created expectations of engagement, which would not be lived up to by the main promoters, i.e. Western governments and NGO's. James Hughes remarks that "the expectations of moderate Chechen leaders for international pressure on Russia were naïve."⁶⁷⁸

State Secretary Espen Barth Eide, present at the release of the Amnesty report, stated that: "We address the Chechen conflict as often as possible, even though we know Russia dislikes it. ... We respect Russia's sovereignty in Chechnya, but we are opposed to the disproportionate use of power." He claimed that he did not accept the phrase "we are only fighting terrorists" when discussing the matter with the Russians.⁶⁷⁹ State Secretary Barth Eide claimed that the conflict in Chechnya was brutal because both parts behaved brutally. Russian authorities in Moscow had a special responsibility to protect the civilian population, and this was where the authorities had failed, according to the State Secretary. Norwegian authorities had repeatedly underscored this to the Russian authorities. "Even though the conditions are bad in Chechnya, this cannot be used to describe the situation in Russia in general", he added.⁶⁸⁰

Barth Eide showed that Norwegian authorities were well aware of different versions of the conflict. Nonetheless, he stressed that the situation was brutal because both parties were acting out brutalities. The prolonged conflict had severely brutalized protagonists on both sides. However there were many actors on the Chechen separatist side, such as Aslan Maskhadov, who repeatedly spoke out against acts of terrorism and attacks against civilians. These actors repeatedly sought dialogue with the Russian authorities, who again rejected them as

⁶⁷⁶ «Amnesty vil prioritere menneskeretter i Russland»[Amnesty will prioritize human rights in Russia], *NTB*, 30.5.2000

⁶⁷⁷ «Dyster rapport», *Klassekampen*, 31.5.2001

⁶⁷⁸ Hughes 2007: 128.

⁶⁷⁹ «Slakter Russiske overgrep»[Deprecates Russian violations], *VG*, 30.5.2001

⁶⁸⁰ «Slakter Russiske overgrep», *VG*, 30.5.2001

terrorists.⁶⁸¹ These Chechens ended up fighting for their lives, because negotiations were out of the question. Maskhadov and others thus ended up joining forces with extremists such as Shamil Basaev.

Barth Eide claimed that Norway ran extensive human rights promotion indirectly through the Barents Sea cooperation. On the question why the Barents Sea cooperation had not focused explicitly on human rights, he stated that it was not something the State Secretary could answer to. Norway did achieve a great deal, even though the situation in regards of Chechnya was difficult, he added.⁶⁸² This is once more an example of Norwegian authority's confidence that Russia could be turned over and influenced into a democracy through cooperation and interaction with others.

"We do not question Russia's sovereignty over the area, nor do we question Russia's right to maintain law and order in its own state." State Secretary Barth Eide admitted that there had clearly been committed violations far beyond any international standard for protection of civilians. However, according to Barth Eide, Russia had become "allergic" to the never-ending criticism and reacted with irritation and frustration. That made it exceedingly more difficult to proceed with human rights approaches toward Russia that would actually lead forth. Eide added that it was important to give the Russians a chance and that it was not correct to treat Russia as a "worst case" that does not want to take care of its citizens.⁶⁸³

The Norwegian government still hoped to see Russia develop into a Western democracy. Barth Eide made a point of showing the frustration displayed by Russian authorities on continued inquiries about Chechnya. During the first Russo-Chechen war, it was easier to discuss Chechnya with the Russians. It was seemingly also easier to obtain understanding for external concern. During the first war, Russia was still making efforts to be part of the "good company". When Putin came to power, it became remarkably more difficult for anyone concerned over the Russian conduct in Chechnya. This was true for both NGO's and human rights activist, but also for other governments. Barth Eide, as he was presented in the newspapers, demonstrated an understanding of the Russian frustration.

It was not only Foreign Ministers that were worried of the development in Chechnya. Senior counsellor Jan Egil Mosand from the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, who had

⁶⁸¹ «Bombingen av Tsjetsjenia fortsetter» [Bombing of Chechnya continues], *NTB*, 28.9.1999; «Tsjetsjenias leder ønsker møte med Vollebæk. Russerne sier trolig nei» [Chechnya's leader requests meeting with Vollebæk. Russians will probably refuse], *Aftenposten* 15.12.1999; «Ber om fredssamtaler» [Requests Peace-talks], *Adresseavisen*, 3.3.2000.

⁶⁸² «Amnesty vil prioritere menneskeretter i Russland», *NTB*, 30.5.2000.

⁶⁸³ «Amnesty vil ha skjerpet kritikk av Russland Maner Norge til å vise større mot» [Amnesty wants sharpened criticism of Russia, urges Norway to show greater courage], *Aftenposten*, 31.5.2001.

accompanied an observations mission into Chechnya and the refugee-camps in the neighbour republic Ingushetia, commented that: "It is still war in Chechnya, and the Russian army focuses mostly on the civilians." According to Mosand the Russian authorities did everything in their power to force the Chechens back into Chechnya. They had cut off electricity, gas, and food deliverances to the refugee camps in Ingushetia. Tuberculosis and jaundice were spreading and the local hospital refused to receive Chechen patients.⁶⁸⁴

"For how long are we going to keep our eyes closed to the Russians gruesome violations in Chechnya?" Jan-Egil Mosand posed the question in a newspaper comment. He encouraged the Norwegian government to address the matter in the Council of Europe and the UN Security Council. Norway and its allies want to see a friend in the sociable President Putin, Mosand claimed. According to Mosand, Chechnya was perceived by Norwegian authorities as a Russian internal affair and did not threaten the good Russo-Norwegian relations. Mosand said that he understood that Norway needed to keep good relations with the large neighbour in the North -East. The need to cooperate with the Russians on administrating the resources in the Barents Sea region, and the cleaning up of nuclear waste was also by Mosand considered important. However, he stressed that Norway must be able to speak up and state that the crimes against humanity that are taking in place in Chechnya are not internal affairs. "What is happening in Chechnya is some of the worst I have ever seen". Mosand had been to war zones in Africa, Afghanistan and Bosnia, and considered himself to have seen his share of brutality. The solid wall of silence met in the Western world is despairing, he said: "It is a betrayal to sit passively on the sideline, watching these terrible acts perpetrated on old people and children".⁶⁸⁵

STICKING TO SILENCE: AFTERWORD

On 2 September 2002 journalist and human rights activist Anna Politkovskaya visited Oslo, where she held an address at the Nobel Institute. She spoke of the situation in Chechnya, and what she interpreted as a dangerous development in Russia with regards to neglecting human rights, and the tendency towards autocracy by the new Russian President Putin and his regime. Still alive and well, she thoroughly criticized the Western governments and their leaders on

⁶⁸⁴ «Bekymret for situasjonen i Tsjetsjenia»[Concerned about the situation in Chechnya], Klassekampen, 9.11.2001

⁶⁸⁵ «Flyktningerådet med nødrop fra Tsjetsjenia»[Refugee Council with cries for help from Chechnya], *NTB*, 5.9.2001

their silence towards the situation in Chechnya.⁶⁸⁶ State Secretary to Foreign Minister at the time, Kim Traavik said retrospectively, that when a person such as Politkovskaya visited Norway, Norwegian authorities paid close attention to her views on the situation in Chechnya. However, in this regard he stressed the different roles the Norwegian authorities had compared to NGOs. Norwegian authorities had to weigh out how to expose Norwegian attitudes towards the Russo-Chechen conflict. It was not granted whether it was best to criticize Russia publicly or bring the matter up discreetly.⁶⁸⁷

On 24 October 2002 a hostage crisis, at the hands of Chechens, arose in the Dubrovka theatre in Moscow. The Chechen perpetrators called for attention to their cause, and reportedly tried to reach government members outside Russia to negotiate. Several inquiries were addressed to Norway, but any Norwegian involvement was denounced that night.⁶⁸⁸ The terror incident, where Russian forces killed most of the hostages by pumping poisonous gas into the theatre was thoroughly condemned by the Western European governments. Once again, less sympathy was earned for the Chechens. "I condemn the operation that Chechen separatist have launched against many hundred innocent civilians in Moscow, by keeping them hostage. No *cause* can justify such acts", Foreign Minister Petersen stated.⁶⁸⁹ Petersen pleaded that the perpetrators should release the hostages and ended by stating that: "Norway's attitude is that a political solution to the conflict in Chechnya must be sought through dialogue between the two parts."⁶⁹⁰

A month later, in the anticipation of a forthcoming visit from the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik had an op-ed published. The op-ed was a tribute to Norway's peaceful relations with Russia throughout history. He emphasized that Norway, together with Russia, took a firm stand against terrorism. He did not mention Chechnya and the only sentence not overly positive was "[i]t is the leader of our largest neighbour state, a great power with economic prosperity, with huge human resources, but with large tasks waiting, who is paying us a visit on 12 November".⁶⁹¹ The resemblance to Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland's leading comment on Yeltsin was striking. As

⁶⁸⁶ «Europas dobbeltmoral», *Amnesty International Norge*, 11.12.2002, <http://www.amnesty.no/aktuelt/flere-nyheter/arkiv-reportasjer/europas-dobbeltmoral> (13.5.2010)

⁶⁸⁷ Conversation with Kim Traavik on the phone 18.2.2010

⁶⁸⁸ «Norge ville ikke megle ved gisselaksjon», *Aftenposten*, 22.10.2003.

⁶⁸⁹ «Petersen: Terror av alvorligste slag» [Terror of the gravest kind], *NTB*, 24.10.2002.

⁶⁹⁰ «Petersen: Terror av alvorligste slag», *NTB*, 24.10.2002.

⁶⁹¹ [Det er statsoverhodet for vårt største naboland, en stormakt i økonomisk fremgang, med store menneskelige ressurser, men med store oppgaver foran seg, som kommer på besøk 12.november.], Bondevik, Kjell Magne, 2002: «Russland har skapt respekt og tillit» [Russia has created respect and trust], *Aftenposten*, 10.11.2002., <http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikker/article433156.ece>. (13.5.2010)

opposed to Brundtland, however, Bondevik did not mention Chechnya at all. The public condemnation of Chechen terrorism was considerable, but Russian violations in Chechnya was according to the Norwegian government brought up in closed forums.⁶⁹² At a time with more documentation than ever on the humanitarian catastrophe in Chechnya, the response towards Russian authorities was rather mild. Anna Politkovskaya's appeals for stronger reactions was heard but not acted on.

⁶⁹² «Øredøvende Norsk taushet om Tsjetsjenia», *NY TID*, 4.10.2003.

7: STRATEGIC SILENCE? A CONCLUSION

A high profile in regards of human rights and humanitarian law is a characteristic part of Norwegian Foreign Policy, preferably however, when there aren't any interests of greater importance at stake, interests that for instance are linked to allied nations or powerful neighbours.⁶⁹³

Olav Riste, Professor of International History, states that when a small country like Norway maintains a high profile foreign policy, it should be important to ensure a "proper balance between shadow and substance."⁶⁹⁴ Do Norway's actual achievements underpin its grand ambitions as human rights promoter and advocate? Political scientist Tore Nyhamar's quote above is *one* answer to this question, establishing an unambiguous point of departure, foreshadowing the thesis' main conclusion.

WHAT CONFLICT?

What perception did Norway have of the Russo-Chechen conflict? The analysis of the source material available showed that Norwegian interpretation of the conflict changed over time, as natural is, as the conflict changed over time. It also shows that the decision makers were aware of the fact that the Russo-Chechen conflict was differently presented by different actors involved in the conflict. Prime Minister Bondevik went as far as saying that he did not completely "trust" the Russian version. Foreign Minister Vollebæk got to see with his own eyes that Russian authorities' version did not match the actual situation he faced in Chechnya. Nonetheless, as Vollebæk stated in an interview, the Norwegian government could not explicitly question Russia's official version, because they would easily be accused of spreading lies or false propaganda. It would also be deemed rude if Norway's government entered conversations with Russians asserting *a priori* that what the Russians were saying was untrue. This discussion is not an effort to show that the Russian version was "all false" or that other actors' versions were nearer to the "truth". It is merely an attempt to show some of the difficulty of apprehending the conflict situation Norwegian decision makers were dealing with.

⁶⁹³ [En høy profil med hensyn til menneskerettigheter og folkerett er et karakteristisk trekk ved norsk utenrikspolitikk, men helst når mer overordnede interesser, som for eksempel knytter seg til allierte eller mektige nabostater, ikke står på spill.], Jon Hovi og Raino Malnes(edt.), 2003: 178-79.

⁶⁹⁴ Riste 2005: 285.

The first Russo-Chechen war was the first “television war” in the territory of the former Soviet Union.⁶⁹⁵ The journalists’ version of what was going on in Chechnya was reported straight into living rooms all over the world, even back to the protagonists themselves.⁶⁹⁶ What is interesting, nonetheless, is that the Russo-Chechen wars were also “information wars”. The Chechen insurgents’ version often won sympathy with Western journalists and popular opinion. The Norwegian government seemingly perceived it as a separatist conflict, and often referred to Chechens as separatists. This is supported by the stressing of Russia’s right to defend territorial integrity. The Chechen call for secession was, in accordance with this view, illegitimate. However, Norway, along with other governments, repeatedly criticized Russia for its excessive use of violence. Awareness of the human rights violations perpetrated by Russian forces was in place. Nonetheless, this criticism was increasingly followed by condemnations of Chechen acts of terrorism. Although the attention towards the situation had decreased before 9/11 2001, Norwegian authorities verbally associated Chechens with terrorism exceedingly often after the attacks on the Twin Towers.

According to Vollebæk looking back, it was hard to relate to Chechen leaders as legitimate political actors. Due of the use of terrorism by some Chechen protagonists such as Shamil Basaev, Russia considered all Chechen actors unreliable in the second war. This was not shared by Norwegian decision makers, who regarded President Aslan Maskhadov reliable enough for talks. However, the fact that the Kremlin’s version was the “official” version was an additional factor that made it hard not to accept it for the Western governments or openly question it, increasingly so after 9/11. There is an absence of an international consensus as to the difference between “freedom fighters” and “terrorists”.⁶⁹⁷ In this respect it is tempting to compare the legendary and notorious Shamil Basaev with the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Up until late 1980s, Yasser Arafat was considered to be one of the world’s most dangerous terrorists. However, after taking part in negotiations with the Israeli government, he won the Nobel peace prize – and “the hearts” of the international establishment. Most of the original Chechen leaders, Dudaev, Maskhadov, Basaev and Sadulayev have been killed as terrorists. However, it is possible that in the future a Chechen leader, in cooperation with Russian authorities may accomplish a “change of heart”. As of yet, however, the Russian framing of the wars as legitimate and necessary campaigns against banditry and international terrorism have won acceptance. A reminder of Giorgio Agamben’s theory of spaces of

⁶⁹⁵ Tishkov 1997: 188.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid: 188.

⁶⁹⁷ James Hughes, 2007: 145.

exception is here in place. So is the hopelessness many Norwegian decision makers seem to have felt in addressing the situation in Chechnya with Russian authorities. The Russian definition power isolated Chechnya and its regime and made it harder for international organizations and NGOs to get involved in Chechnya.

THE RUSSO-CHECHEN CONFLICT IN NORWEGIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS

To what degree was Norwegian policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict affected by domestic considerations in form of Norwegian public opinion or national values? The Chechen conflict has by and large received little attention in Norway. Disturbing news and images of human rights violations and act of terrorism committed during the two wars has broken the silence days at the time. Norwegian politicians have concerned themselves with the conflict to a small degree, with a few exceptions.

The consensus tradition was not challenged by the Russo-Chechen conflict. Discussions took place in the Parliament and in the media, with occasional oppositional criticism of the government's policy. Oppositional political parties' criticism of the Norwegian governments' "mild response" towards the conflict tends to follow three tendencies. First, it seems as if the criticism often was an ordinary "oppositional strategy" to gain goodwill in domestic politics. Oppositional parties criticized the government in general for not doing what "they should or could", thus placing themselves in a flattering light as human rights advocates. Second, it often took form of criticism of the Norwegian government's relations with Russia in general. Parties such as the Progress Party and the Conservative Party thought Norway led a too careful line towards Russia. Chechnya was in this regard used by these parties as an example of how Russia behaved, and that Norway should be worried about its large neighbour and take more military and strategic precaution in the High North.

Third, the sitting government was often accused of not being concerned enough of human rights in general. Chechnya was often brought forth as an example of this. With the Progress Party as only exception, most parties in opposition were given a chance to alter the Norwegian foreign policy of its predecessor. However, it should be observed that none of the governments conducted a policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict widely different from the others. It should also be observed that it was many of the same individuals that "circulated" foreign political decision making despite changing governments. Except for the years holding the leadership of the OSCE troika, the Bondevik I government maintained the Norwegian foreign policy consensus towards Chechnya, despite of having a minister

specifically working for human rights. The Bondevik I government used a different rhetoric, more ideological and less pragmatic than the Labour party government. Nevertheless, this did not alter the policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict. Domestic factors had, consequently, little effect on how Norway related to the conflict.

REGIONAL CONCERNS

Regional considerations, such as the interest for natural resources, environmental threats and Russian neighborship in the High North, can be considered to have had a paramount affect on how Norway related to the Russo-Chechen conflict. The Barents Sea and the surrounding region were during the 1990s of massive importance to Norway. It is where “tiny” Norway and great power Russia physically touch each other. It is where fish and petroleum, two of the most important natural resources for both states, can be found. It is also an area containing huge environmental threats due to Soviet atomic waste left from the days of the arms race between USSR and USA. The area cannot be considered other than essential to Norway.

How important the Barents Sea region is considered was recently illustrated by Professor Iver B. Neumann. He denominated former foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg as the “Norwegian champion of foreign affairs”.⁶⁹⁸ He legitimized his choice out of the 12 foreign ministers Norway has had since 1972, by claiming that Stoltenberg had increased Norway’s room of manoeuvre in the international structure. This had been done through the foreign ministers’ calculations of what could and was needed to be done domestically and internationally to improve Norway’s position. Especially Stoltenberg’s efforts to establish the Euro Arctic Barents Sea Region cooperation was considered important.⁶⁹⁹ The High North has since only received increased attention from Norwegian decision makers.

The MFA’s main task has always been to preserve security for Norway and its citizens. As to the situation of being neighbours with Russia, a regional great power, Norway did not seem to fear a military response if it criticized Russia’s human rights violations “too harshly”. Norwegian decision makers seem to have had stoic confidence in NATO’s will and abilities to protect them. However, it can seem as if Norwegian decision makers were afraid that if they were too resolute in dealings with Russia and attempted sanctioning Russia over Chechnya, negative consequences would result. Not through a military invasion, or physical attack, but Russian decision makers might become difficult to “deal with”. Russia could “sabotage” important cooperation in the northern areas. Thus, the realist perspective is quite

⁶⁹⁸ Iver B. Neumann, «NM i utenriks» [Norwegian Championship in foreign affairs], *Morgenbladet*, 12.3.2010.

⁶⁹⁹ Iver B. Neumann, «NM i utenriks», *Morgenbladet*, 12.3.2010.

obvious in Norway's overall relations with Russia. However, in regards to how Norway related to the *Russo-Chechen conflict* there are other perspectives that nuances the picture more than just establishing that Norway is a small state afraid of the large state Russia.

Norway worked hard through the 1990s to include Russia in all possible organizations and formal structures. A liberalist perspective on the efforts put into the Barents Sea cooperation underscores this. If Norway could integrate Russia in as many possible regional and international structures, Norway's geographic situation would become a more secure place. Nonetheless, the confidence in the idea of moral persuasion seems to have affected how

Norwegian decision makers related to the conflict, bringing us to the constructivist perspective. All of the decision makers I have talked to have underscored the point of asking the question "what would be the most effective way to affect Russia's handling of Chechnya". They all seem to consider that they did what was possible. All of them at one point verbally criticized the Russian conduct in public or closed forums. In the perspective of speech act theory this can also be considered political acts, and the criticism a form of sanctioning. However, this would not have been possible if this criticism was not perceived as legitimate by all parts. This can also be observed as Russian authorities were more receptive to criticism in the mid-nineties, than they were from 1999 and on.

The idea that Russia could be affected in the right direction seems to have been widespread among policy makers. On the contrary, as the second war unfolded, it was by many NGO's and human rights activist regarded as a failed strategy. It had not been successful in convincing Russia to act less brutally. Part of this criticism was based on a general notion that Norway could have been more explicit in its criticism, taken more responsibility in international reactions against Russian conduct and not been "so willing" to promote Russian membership in organizations where Russia did not fulfil the requirements regarding human rights and democracy, such as the Council of Europe.

INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES

How much did international structures and considerations towards the USA, NATO, EU, UN and OSCE affect Norway's policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict? To discern what international structures affected Norway's relation to Russia in general, and to the Russo-Chechen conflict specifically in this period, several momentums must be kept in mind. The regional and international factors overlap and intertwine. The structural context of the Russo-Chechen wars can be characterized into two dissimilar periods in time.

These differences are evident in the responses to the conflict both domestically in Russia, but also internationally. Uncertainty reigned Europe in the early 1990s, especially in regards of what would become of post-Soviet Russia. The nascent democracy in Russia had been promising, and great optimism ruled European governments. Russia was seemingly eager to live up to westernized democratic standards of society and economy. Russia was in that perspective more willing, although perhaps not enthusiastically, to listen and adjust to external “advice”. Central Russian actors admitted that mistakes had been made launching the first Russo-Chechen war. Western governments, including Norway, while critical, were willing to turn a blind eye to selective violations in Russia as long as the overall situation was improving. The first Russo-Chechen war was notably different compared to the second due to how it ended. The first war was actually brought to an end through peace negotiations facilitated by external international structures, i.e. the OSCE. The, ultimately wasted, window of opportunity had presented itself in the three small years of relative peace in Chechnya. Instead of demanding to get involved, international organizations such as the Council of Europe, the UN and OSCE allowed Russia to isolate the independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

During the second Russo-Chechen war the structural international political situation was more settled with regard to Russia. However, there was also a more pessimistic atmosphere. The Western European governments, including Norway, had since the mid 1990s lost some of the optimism toward the democratic development of Russia. Further, the Western European states, excluding Norway, were becoming increasingly dependent on Russian delivery of energy. With the “War on Terror” unfolding after 9/11 and the need for intelligence on Afghanistan grew, the Russo-Atlantic spirit of cooperation was strengthened.

Alongside this development, the criticism faded. Russia had, since 1999, gained a headstrong leader, who was seemingly more determined than Yeltsin: Vladimir Putin did not waver on his decision to proceed with the extermination of terrorists in what he called the anti-terror campaign in Chechnya. He was considered extremely resolute against any external involvement. This atmosphere made it unlikely that Norway alone would speak up and rebuke Russian conduct publicly.

It is in light of the international relations that the most distinct and exceptional Norwegian approach towards the Russo-Chechen conflict was displayed. Foreign Minister Vollebæk’s engagement as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE displayed how Norway’s policy towards Chechnya was affected by the structures of international politics. It is hard to discard Vollebæk and the Norwegian MFA’s engagement and efforts to improve the situation in

Chechnya in this period. However, Vollebæk was helpless when the most powerful actors in international politics decided to handle the situation differently. Russia let the international community over the threshold only when it was convenient for the Kremlin. While he was head of the peace solution oriented organization OSCE, Vollebæk also supported the “humanitarian intervention” in Kosovo to discourage Milosevic’s ethnic cleansing of Kosovo-Albanians.

ALL IS RELATIVE?

“The Russo-Chechen conflict has received little attention.” This phrase has in some form been stated so many times that it almost invalidates the statement itself. Without claiming that “all is relative” one must ask – little attention compared to what? The question has appeared while I have examined much material on Chechnya. Some of the material has been specifically on Chechnya, such as NGO reports on human rights in general, or on the situation in Chechnya in particular. Norwegian newspaper articles that mention Chechnya in any way have also been examined. Years of foreign policy debates and other published documents have been perused to see what the documents can tell about Norwegian policy towards the Russo-Chechen conflict. Needless to say, the Russo-Chechen conflict has been discussed among Norway’s political elite; it has been written about in newspapers; thus it has received attention. It has definitely not been forgotten, which has also been another standard phrase. Journalistic coverage of foreign affairs tends to reflect the focus of the government, NGO’s or other “authorities” on the matter. Without blindly following the latter assertion, a media analysis can be used as an indicator.

Comparing the overall “coverage” of the Russo-Chechen conflict with another similar conflict did provide at least *one* perspective that removes *some* of the relativity. The search-engine Retriever provided an analysis of the media covering Chechnya, and Kosovo. The analysis result, which can be found in the appendix, confirmed “little attention” towards the Russo-Chechen conflict. As the Kosovo conflict escalated with the Kosovo-Albanian claim for sovereignty its coverage was threefold that of the Russo-Chechen conflict. During autumn 1999, the year of NATO’s bombardment of Serbia and Russia’s invasion of Chechnya, 9,969 articles are documented on Kosovo, as opposed to 1,724 articles on Chechnya. These are the most extreme numbers. Nonetheless, in 2000 as the war raged in Chechnya and Kosovo went into a period of lesser military activity the number of articles on Kosovo was 3,962, as compared with the 1,935 articles on Chechnya. This small and particular analysis is not intended to state much empirically about the coverage of Chechnya and Kosovo in the period.

However, it is meant to provide some perspective on the scale of attention the Russo-Chechen conflict has received.

ONE DISCREPANCY TOO MANY

Norwegian images of Norway as a peace nation and human rights advocate are many and strong. This image collides with reality when Norway interacts with Russia. Shadow and substance of Norwegian human rights advocacy is thoroughly imbalanced. The outspokenness when it comes to criticizing human rights violations seems to become muted somewhere across the Barents Sea and at the *Jacobselv* border. It seems to be the fear of disturbing the good historical relations and cooperation in the northern areas where Norway has essential resources that prevents Norway from criticising Russia. This again strengthens the impression that Norwegian decision makers have perceptions of Russia that does not correspond with the official version of Russo-Norwegian relations that they present publicly. Norwegian decision makers seem to be of the opinion that they cannot demand of Russia to live up to the standards Russia has committed itself to, through international treaties and agreements. If Norwegian authorities do not *believe* that Russia can function by the same standards required by others, it is less likely that Norway will demand it. Norway and the rest of Western Europe avoided seriously sanctioning Russia over its human rights violations in Chechnya in fear of disturbing an ongoing democratic process. Western Europe was seemingly afraid of isolating Russia and bringing about a “cold peace”.

Speculating in how the situation for hundreds of thousands of Chechens and Russians could have been different if Western European states had been more consistent in protecting human rights is perhaps pointless. Nonetheless, by allowing Russia to show utmost brutality against a specific group of people, in line with Derek Gregory, through creating a “space of exception”, the double standards have become obvious to all including Russia. Thus, it has seriously weakened the moral authority of human rights, its promoters and activists, and the organizations based on protecting basic rights for all people.

In an op-ed from November 1997 Senior Researcher at NUPI, Henrik Thune, wrote that the Norwegian government has engaged itself with matters and questions where there has reigned a broad consensus among the nations Norway wanted “to play ball with”.⁷⁰⁰ However, he wrote, the government had remained more quiet and unclear on controversial issues such as the Kurds in Turkey, Algeria, East-Timor, Nigeria and Chechnya. He posed the question of

⁷⁰⁰ Henrik Thune, «Idealisme og egennytte», *Dagbladet*, 24.11.1997.

whether Norway was willing to pay the cost of delivering the moral excellence Norwegian governments often invoke.⁷⁰¹ In the case of Chechnya the answer was apparently negative.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

APPENDIX I: MAP OVER CHECHNYA

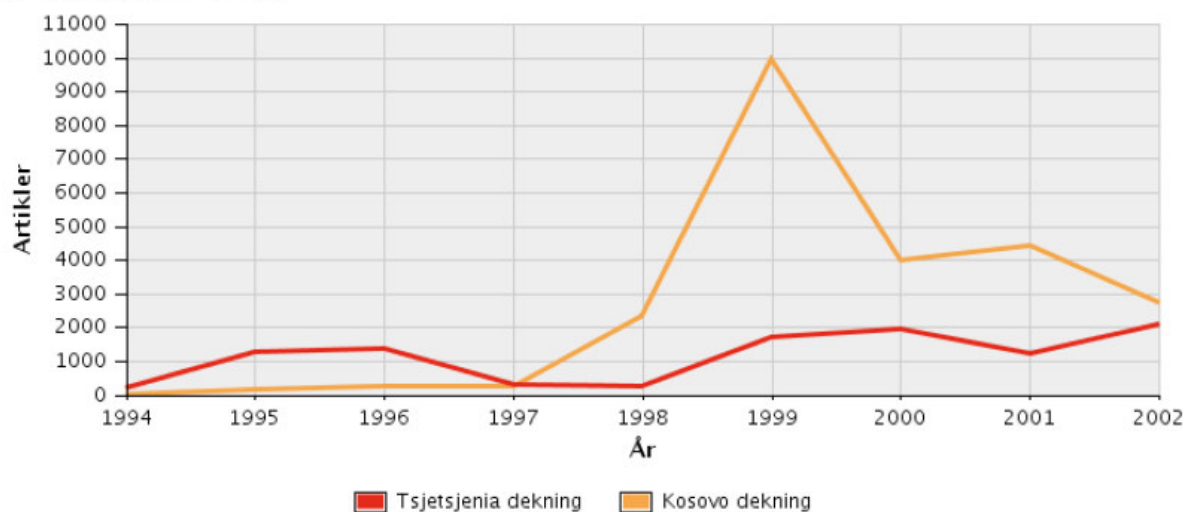
Chechnya

APPENDIX II: MEDIA ANALYSIS

Arkivanalyse - Universitetet i Oslo

Uttak: 23.03.2010 Kilde: Retriever

Dekning over tid



Søk

Tsjetsjenia dekning

01.11.1994 - 31.12.2002

Kosovo dekning

01.11.1994 - 31.12.2002

Søk	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Tsjetsjenia dekning	201	1 276	1 373	305	241	1 724	1 935	1 230
Kosovo dekning	23	129	235	237	2 329	9 969	3 962	4 433
Totalt	224	1 405	1 608	542	2 570	11 693	5 897	5 663

Søk	2002	Totalt
Tsjetsjenia dekning	2 083	10 368
Kosovo dekning	2 723	24 040
Totalt	4 806	34 408

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

INTERVIEWS:

Bjørn Tore Godal

Cecilie Landsverk

Kim Traavik

Knut Vollebæk

Odd Gunnar Skagestad

OTHER:

Brev til Hilde K. Røsstad fra det Kongelige Utenriksdepartement 22.5.2009, 08/07123-6

PUBLISHED MATERIAL

St. tid. [Parliament Proceedings] pp. 1923-1930 (1994-95), Statement to the Parliament on foreign affairs by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal, 19.1.1995

St. tid. [Parliament Proceedings] pp. 2005-2079 (1994-95), Parliament's foreign policy debate, 31.1.1995

INTERNET SOURCES:

Bondevik, Kjell Magne, 2002: «Russland har skapt respekt og tillit» [Russia has created respect and trust], Aftenposten, 10.11.2002.,
<http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikker/article433156.ece>.

Briefing to the Parliament on the situation in Kosovo and the rest of the region, by Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, 7.6.1999,
http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/1999/proposal_for_a_peace_plan_for_kosovo.html?id=263443

Curtis, Mark 2010: *Doublethink: The two faces of Norway's foreign and development policy*, Forum for Utvikling og Miljø, Oslo 2010, <http://www.forumfor.no/Artikler/5677.html>

«Europas dobbeltmoral», *Amnesty International Norge*, 11.12.2002

<http://www.amnesty.no/aktuelt/flere-nyheter/arkiv-reportasjer/europas-dobbeltmoral>
<http://www.osce.org/about/13518.html>

Istanbul Summit Document, 1999: 50-51,

http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1999/11/4050_en.pdf

Jagland, Thorbjørn, 2001: «Terror anslagene mot USA-et tidsskille i international politikk» [The Terror onslaughts at USA- a Watershed in International Politics], speech held at the Oslo Militære Samfund 1.10.2000,

http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2001/terroranslagene_mot_usa_-et_tidsskille.html?id=265064

«Life with an idiot», *The Russia Journal*, 26.3.2000, <http://www.russaijournal.com/node/2857>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Matlary, Janne Haaland, 2002: Verdidiplomati – kilde til makt? [Value diplomacy: A source to power] Makt- og demokratiutredningens rapportserie, Rapport 46, august 2002, <http://www.sv.uio.no/mutr/publikasjoner/rapp2002/Rapport46.html>
- Menneskerettigheter 2001: http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-II/ud/Rapporter-og-planer/2002/menneskerettigheter_2001.html?id=260400;
- MR: Årsrapport 1999: http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-I/ud/Rapporter-og-planer/2000/mr-arsrapport_1999.html?id=260100
- NATO Press release no. 1999(040), 23.3.1999, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-040e.html>
- «Norge - en 'ræv-dilter' i Sikkerhetsrådet?», Statement to Bergen's Student Society on Norway's membership in the UN Security Council by State Secretary Raymond Johansen, 5.4.2001, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2001/norge_-_en_raevdilter_i_sikkerhetsradet.html?id=265230
- «Nye 9 millioner i nødhjelp til Tsjetsjenia», Press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30.10.1995, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/regjeringen-brundtland-iii/ud/Nyheter-og-pressemeddelinger/1995/nye_9_millioner_i_nodhjelp_til.html?id=235645
- Oral Question Hour in the Parliament, question no. 3, 19 January 2000, <http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/1999-2000/000119/ordinarsporretime/3/>
- Parliament's Oral Question Hour, Question 3, 15.11.2000, <http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2000-2001/001115/ordinarsporretime/3/>
- Parliament's Oral Question Hour, Question 4, 19.1.2000, <http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/1999-2000/000119/ordinarsporretime/4/>
- Parliament's Oral Question Hour, Question 4, 19.1.2000, <http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/1999-2000/000119/ordinarsporretime/4/>
- Press Release from the Norwegian MFA, no. 30/00, 3.4.2000, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Nyheter-og-pressemeddelinger/2000/utenriksminister_jagland_tar_oppgjor.html?id=242432
- Skagestad, Odd Gunnar, 1999: «Keeping hope alive: Experiences of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya», in Yearbook on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Baden-Baden 1999: 211-223. <http://www.ogskestad.info/attachments/File/OSCEYearbook99.pdf>
- Statement to Oslo Militære Samfund [Oslo Military Society] by Defense Minister Jørgen Kosmo 9.1.1995, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Brundtland-III/fd/261248/261249/taler_-_norges_forsvar,_hvor_star.html?id=261280
- Statement to the Parliament on foreign affairs by Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, 20.1.2000, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2000/utenriks-og_sikkerhetspolitiske.html?id=264274
- Statement to the Parliament on Foreign Policy by Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 20.3.2001, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2001/utenriksminister_thorbjorn_jaglands.html?id=264645
- Statement to the Parliament on human rights by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal 10.10.1996; <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/regjeringen-brundtland->

- iii/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/1996/statement_to_the_storting_on_human.html?id=261849
 Statement to the Parliament on the Barents cooperation by Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal, 24.4.1995, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/regjeringen-brundtland-iii/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/1995/statement_to_the_storting_on_the.html?id=261376
 Statement to the Parliament on the Norwegian OSCE engagement by foreign minister Thorbjørn Jagland, 31.10.2000, http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/ud/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2000/om_samarbeidet_i_organisasjonen.html?id=264226

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

Chapter 1:

- «De sa vi ikke kunne klare det», *NY TID*, 15.6.2001.
 Hilde Kristin Røssstad, «Hvorfor vi glemmer Tsjetsjenia» [Why we forget Chechnya], *Dagsavisen*, 28. oktober 2009.
 «Norsk utenrikspolitikk selger» [Norwegian foreign policy sells], *Aftenposten*, 31.3.1995.
 «Tiltagende vestlig kritikk av Russland» [Rising criticism against Russia], *Morgenbladet*, 13.1.1995.

Chapter 2:

- Audun Trellevik, «Menn som forsvinner» [Men whom disappears], *Dagsavisen*, 27.3.2010
 «Sjevardnadse drøfter oljepolitikk i London» [Shevardnadze discusses oil politics in London], *NTB*, 15.2.1995

Chapter 3:

- «Drept av raketter» [Killed by rockets], *VG*, 13.12.1994
 «Et utall etniske konflikter raser i det gamle SSSR», *NTB*, 28.10.1992
 «Feil om Tsjetsjenia» [Wrong about Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995.
 «Flyktningerådet: Sommel og byråkrati i UD» [Refugee Council: Tardiness and Bureaucracy in the MFA], *NTB*, 17.3.1995.
 «Fordømmelse av Russland» [Condemnations of Russia], *Aftenposten*, 1.2.1995.
 «Forsvarsminister Kosmo urolig: Jeltsin kan ha tapt kontrollen» [Defence Minister Kosmo: Yeltsin may have lost control], *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995.
 «Granatene regner over Grosnyj og kritikken øker» [Granates keep pouring over Grosny and the criticism accrues], *NTB* 9.1.2009.
 «Gro i miljø-samtale med Tsjernomyrdin», *NTB*, 9.5.1995.
 «Grozny under Russisk blokade» [Grozny under Russian blockade], *Aftenposten* 15.12.1994.
 «Indre anliggende» [Internal Affair], *Aftenposten*, 7.1.1995
 «Kaukasus i etnisk brann», *Aftenposten*, 2.10.1992
 «Kaukasus- Kruttønna som kan eksplodere», *NTB*, 4.2.1993
 «Kommentar: Norges utenrikspolitiske sårbarhet» [Leading comment: Norway's Foreign Polical Vulnerability], *Aftenposten*, 19.1.1995.
 «Kritisk for sivile i Tsjetsjenia» [Critical for civilians in Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 31.1.1995.
 «Norge vil ha stans i kampene i Tsjetsjenia» [Norway calls for a halt in the fighting in Chechnya], *NTB*, 2.1.1995
 «Norsk nødhjelp til Tsjetsjenia» [Norwegian Humanitarian Aid to Chechnya], *NTB*, 16.3 1995.
 «Nye kamper i Tsjetsjenia» [New fighting in Chechnya], *NTB*, 13.12.1994

- «Russere og Tsjetsjenere i åpen kamp»[Russians and Chechens in open fight], *Aftenposten*, 13.12.1994
- «Russerne frykter muslimsk løsrivelse»[Russia fears Muslim secession], *NTB*, 2.1.1995.
- «Russisk frykt for omfattende krig i Kaukasus», *NTB* 10.11.1992
- «Russland og Tsjetsjenia på grensen til krig»[Russia and Chechnya at the brink of war], *NTB*, 29.11.1994.
- «UD somler med å gitte støtte til Tsjetsjenske flyktninger»[MFA dawdles to give aid to Chechen refugees], *NTB*, 13.3.1995.
- «UD: Dyp uro over Russerners voldsbruk i Tsjetsjenia»[MFA: Deep concern of Russian violence in Chechnya], *NTB*, 7.1.1995
- «Ustabilitet», *Dagens Næringsliv* 19.5.1993
- «Utenriksminister Godal protesterer i Kreml»[Foreign Minister Godal protests to the Kremlin], *NTB*, 9.1.1995.
- «Utenriksministeren: Russland må ikke isoleres»[Foreign Minister: Russia must not be Isolated], *Aftenposten*, 10.3.1995
- «Viktige drøftinger med russisk toppbyråkrat»[Important consultations with leading Russian bureaucrat], *NTB*, 24.11.1995
- «Økende vestlig bekymring over russisk felttog», *NTB*, 3.1.1995
- «Ønsker skjerpet norsk holdning til Tsjetsjenia-krigen»[Want sharpened norwegian attitude towards the Chechen war], *NTB*, 5.1.1995.

Chapter 4:

- «Aserbajdsjan ønsker nye norske investeringer velkommen»[Azerbaijan welcomes new Norwegian investments], *NTB*, 23.2.2000.
- «Delte meninger om Jeltsins form»[Diverging opinions on Yeltsin's condition], *Aftenposten*, 17.7.1996.
- «-det var en ren henrettelse. Sykepleier Ranheim hadde jevnlig kontakt med de to» [It was an execution. Nurse Ranheim were in frequent contact with the two], *Dagbladet*, 18.12.1996.
- «Fordømmelse av Russland» [Condemnations of Russia], *Aftenposten*, 1.2.1995.
- «Forsvarsminister Kosmo urolig: Jeltsin kan ha tapt kontrollen», *Aftenposten*, 10.1.1995.
- «Godal: Nei til gisler i Tsjetsjenia-konflikten»[Godal: No to hostages in the Chechen conflict], *NTB*, 15.1.1996.
- «Gislene løslatt i morges» [Hostages released this morning], *VG*, 10.1.1996.
- «Godals russiske motparter ryker»[Godal's adversaries are fired], *Dagens Næringsliv*, 22.8.1996.
- Gro Harlem Brundtland, «Boris Jeltsins Russland» [Boris Yeltsin's Russia], *Aftenposten*, 3.4.1996.
- «Ikke norsk politi til Tsjetsjenia»[No Norwegian Police to Chechnya], *VG*, 27.12.1996.
- «Jeltsin gjorde henne til enke» [Yeltsin made her a widow], *Dagbladet*, 23.3.1996.
- «Jeltsin følger ny kurs»[Yeltsin follows new course], *Aftenposten*, 11.1.1996.
- «Jeltsin i Norge: Delelinjen kan falle på plass»[Yeltsin in Norway: the delimitation can be sorted out], *Aftenposten*, 27.3.1996.
- Jan Egeland, «Krig, fred og bistand»[War, Peace and development aid], *Dagbladet*, 26.3.1997.
- «Kan ikke være verre i helvete» [Cannot be worse in Hell], *VG*, 24.3.1996
- «Menneskerettsveteran: -forsøk på justismord på Nikitin»[Human rights veteran: attempted judicial murder], *NTB*, 19.2.1996.
- «Menneskerettigheter teller mest» [Human rights counts the most], *Aftenposten*, 21.10.1997.
- «Natt-sermoni for de drepte»[Night ceremoni for the killed], *Dagbladet*, 19.12.1996.
- «Norge støtter Russisk medlemskap i Europarådet» [Norway support Russian membership in the Council of Europe], *NTB*, 31.1.1996.

- «Norsk utenrikspolitikk i støpeskjeen» [Norwegian foreign policy in the making], *Aftenposten*, 29.9.1997.
- «Primakov ny utenriksminister i Russland» [Primakov new foreign minister of Russia], *NTB*, 9.1.1996
- «Positiv russisk presseomtale av Jeltsins besøk» [Positive Russian reporting on Yeltsin's visit], *NTB*, 27.3.96.
- «Populistisk utenrikspolitikk» [Populistic foreign policy], *Bergens Tidende*, 24.9.1997.
- «Russisk kritikk dempes» [Russian criticism is subdued], *Aftenposten* 3.3.1996.
- «Røde Kors' sykehus trakassert» [Red Cross hospital harrassed], *Aftenposten*, 24.9.1996.
- «Solid ja til Russland i Europarådet» [Solid yes to Russia in the Council of Europe], *NTB*, 25.1.1996.
- «Spionene: Krangel ved ambassaden» [The Spies: Quarrel by the embassy], *Dagbladet*, 13.3.1998.
- «To norske skutt i Tsjetsjenia» [Two Norwegian shot in Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 17.12.1996.
- «Tragedien i Tsjetsjenia – Vi følte oss trygge» [The tragedy in Chechnya- We felt safe], *Aftenposten*, 18.12.1996.
- «Trusler og harde krav i tsjetsjensk gisseldrama» [Threats and tough demands in Chechen hostage drama], *NTB*, 9.1.1996.
- «Tsjetsjenia-konflikten tveegget sverd for Jeltsin» [Chechnya conflict is a double-edged sword to Yeltsin], *Aftenposten* ««Uformelle strukturer har makten i Russland» [Informal structures has taken power in Russia], *NTB*, 13.1.1995.
- «Viktige tosidige spørsmål under samtalene Gro-Jeltsin» [Important bilateral questions in the Gro-Yeltsin conversations], *NTB*, 22.3.1996.
- «Vollebæk skal ta opp menneskerettigheter i Kina» [Vollebæk will adress human rights in China], *NTB*, 17.10.1997.
- «14 000 på flukt fra Tsjetsjenia» [14 000 fleeing from Chechnya], *NTB*, 2.1.1996.
- «600 000 flyktninger etter Tsjetsjenia-krig» [600 000 refugees after Chechen war], *NTB*, «Europeisk rullett» [European Roulette], *Bergens Tidende*, 23.1.1996.
- Lille Norge, hva nå?» [Little Norway, What now?], *VG*, 30.1.1995.
- «Forhastet» [Rushed], *Aftenposten*, 24.1.1996.
- «Lenin på en sokkel» [Lenin on a pedestal], *Nordlys*, 24.1.1996.
- Velkommen Jeltsin» [Welcome, Yeltsin], *Dagbladet* 1.2.1996.
- «Kovaljov», *Aftenposten*, 20.2.1996.
- «Boris, Boris», *Nordlys*, 1.3.96.
- «Boris kommer» [Boris is coming], *Nordlys*, 22.3.96.
- «Jeltsin advarer NATO» [Yeltsin warns NATO], *Nordlys*, 26.3.1996.
- «Hjem til skamros» [Home to extravagant praise], *VG*, 27.3.96.
- «Ebbas beste gave» [Ebba's greatest gift], *VG*, 20.12.1996.
- «Avslappet møte i Moskva» [Relaxed meeting in Moscow], *NTB*, 2.3.1996.
- «Russland nye ansikt» [Russia's new face], *Dagens Næringsliv*, 14.1.1996.
- Jeltsin en folkevalgt Tsar» [Yeltsin a chosen Tsar], *NTB*, 31.12.1999.
- 4.1.1996.

Chapter 5:

- «Ahtisaari vil ikke love Norge forhandlingshjelp » [Ahtisaari will not promise Norway help in negotiations], *NTB*, 2.11.1999.
- «Den politiske arven etter Jeltsin» [The Political Heritage after Yeltsin], *Nordlys*, 22.1.2000.
- «Den snikende tragedien i Kaukasus» [Lurking tragedy in the Caucasus], *Bergens Tidende*, 11.9.1999.
- «Et ambisiøst OSSE i vanskeligheter» [Ambitious OSCE in difficulty], *VG*, 9.12.1999.

- «Fortsatt OSSE-press mot Russland» [Continued OSCE pressure against Russia], *NTB*, 1.1.1999.
- «Full støtte til regjeringen i utvisningsaken» [Full support to the government on the extradition affair], *NTB*, 12.3.1998.
- «Jeltsin til OSSE-møte for å forsvare Tsjetsjenia-krigen» [Yeltsin to the OSCE Meeting to Defend the Chechen war], *NTB*, 15.11.1999.
- «Knytteneve demokraten» [The Fist Democrat], *Aftenposten*, 8.1.2000.
- «Kosovo bekymrer Vollebæk» [Kosovo worries Vollebæk], *Aftenposten*, 2.1.1999.
- «Krever 24 timers våpenhvile» [Demands 24 hours truce], *Bergens Tidene*, 14.12.1999.
- «Møtes i dødens svingdør» [Encounters at deaths' revolving door], *Dagbladet*, 17.12.1999.
- «Norge på innsiden» [Norway on the inside], *VG*, 29.12.1999.
- «Norge som OSSE-leder: Kasteball i Europeisk mareritt» [Norway as OSCE-leader: Shuttlecock in European nightmare], *Aftenposten*, 31.12.1999; «Norge er i krig, Bondevik i natt: Tungt ansvar» [Norway at war, Bondevik: Heavy responsibility], *Dagbladet*, 25.3.1999.
- «OSSE krise i natt: isfront mellom Russland og Vesten» [OSCE crisis: Icy fronts between Russia and the West], *Dagbladet*, 18.11.1999.
- «Presset Russerne på toppmøte i natt» [Pressured the Russians at the Summit Meeting], *VG*, 18.11.1999 «Putin seiret i første runde» [Putin, victor of the first round], *Aftenposten*, 27.3.2000. «Putin lammer all opposisjon» [Putin paralyzes all opposition], *Dagbladet*, 7.1.2000 «Putin fester grepet om makten» [Putin tightens his grip around the power], *Aftenposten*, 20.5.2000 «Putin fester grep» [Putin tightens his grip], *VG*, 4.12.2000.
- «Russerne må sette en frist for tilbaketrekning fra Tsjetsjenia» [Russians must set a deadline for withdrawal from Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 16.11.1999.
- «Russisk avis kritiserer Vollebæk» [Russian newspaper criticizes Vollebæk], *NTB*, 27.11.1999.
- «Russland advarer mot OSSE-møte i Tsjetsjenia's tegn» [Russia warns against an OSCE meeting in the sign of Chechnya], *NTB*, 10.11.1999.
- «Russland får fritt spillerom» [Russia is given free reins], *Aftenposten*, 3.10.1999.
- «Russland vil ikke ha noen ny krig i Tsjetsjenia» [Russia does not want a new war in Chechnya], *Aftenposten*, 12.3.1999.
- «Russland's mange regjeringsskifter» [Russia's many regime changes], *NTB*, 9.8.1999.
- «Russlands ba Vollebæk om støtte i Dagestan» [Russia asks Vollebæk for support in Dagestan], *NTB*, 7.9.1999 .
- «Tsjetsjenia-krigen nøye planlagt» [Chechen War carefully planned], *Aftenposten*, 22.1.2000.
- «Vollebæk ber om mer våpenhvile», [Vollebæk asks for prolonged cease-fire], *NTB*, 13.12.1999.
- «Vollebæk satte tidenes reiserekord» [Vollebæk sets traveling record], *Dagbladet*, 29.1.2000. «Vollebæk til Tsjetsjenia snarest mulig» [Vollebæk to Chechnya as soon as possible], *NTB*, 19.11.1999.
- «Vollebæk vil ikke gripe inn uten Kremls samtykke» [Vollebæk will not interfere without Kremlin's approval], *Aftenposten*, 3.10.1999.
- «Vollebæk: Alarmerende signal fra Kosovo» [Alarming signals from Kosovo], *NTB*, 1.1.1999
- «Vollebæk: OSSE sender folk til Tsjetsjenia» [Vollebæk: OSCE sends people into Chechnya], *NTB*, 2.11.1999.
- «Vollebæks verden» [Vollebæk's World], *Aftenposten*, 24.12.1999.
- Janne Haaland Matlary, «Norsk politikk i OSSE» [Norwegian Policy in the OSCE], *Dagbladet*, 2.2.1998.
- P «Putin utelukker kompromiss med "terrorister"» [Putin no compromise with "terrorist"], *NTB*, 1.11.1999.

Chapter 6:

- «Amnesty vil ha skjerpet kritikk av Russland Maner Norge til å vise større mot» [Amnesty wants sharpened criticism of Russia, urges Norway to show greater courage], Aftenposten, 31.5.2001.
- «Amnesty vil prioritere menneskeretter i Russland» [Amnesty will prioritize human rights in Russia], NTB, 30.5.2000.
- Anne Marit Austbø, «Norske initiativer i Sikkerhetsrådet» [Norwegian initiative in the UN Security Council], NY TID, 15.6.2001.
- «Bekymret for situasjonen i Tsjetsjenia» [Concerned about the situation in Chechnya], Klassekampen, 9.11.2001.
- «Ber Norge fokusere på Tsjetsjenia i Sikkerhetsrådet» [Requests Norway to focus on Chechnya in the Security Council], NTB, 8.12.2000.
- «Ber om fredssamtaler» [Requests Peace-talks], Adresseavisen, 3.3.2000.
- «Bombingen av Tsjetsjenia fortsetter» [Bombing of Chechnya continues], NTB, 28.9.1999.
- «Dyster rapport» [Sombre report], Klassekampen, 31.5.2001.
- «EU – et problem som aldri blir borte» [EU – a problem that does not go away], NTB, 4.1.2000.
- «Flyktningerådet med nødrops fra Tsjetsjenia» [Refugee Council with cries for help from Chechnya], NTB, 5.9.2001
- «Ingen nye EU-utspill overfor Norge i sikkerhetspolitikken» [No new EU-initiatives on security policy towards Norway], NTB, 14.4.2000.
- «Jagland i FNs Menneskerettighetskommisjon: Til kamp mot dødstraff» [Jagland in the UN Commission for Human Rights: To Battle against Death Penalty], Aftenposten, 30.3.2001.
- «Jaglands dilemma» [Jagland's Dilemma], VG, 12.4.2000.
- «Norge i nøkkelrolle i samarbeidet NATO-Russland» [Norway in key position in the NATO-Russian cooperation], NTB, 17.2.2000.
- «Norge tier om Putins undertrykkelse» [Norway is silent on Putin's suppression], NTB, 25.1.2001.
- «Osse lammet i Tsjetsjenia» [OSCE paralyzed in Chechnya], Dagbladet, 16.7.2000.
- «Petersen: Terror av alvorligste slag» [Terror of the gravest kind], NTB, 24.10.2002.
- «Russland bør klages for menneskerettsdomstolen» [Russia should be complained to the ECHR], NTB, 31.3.2000.
- «Russland ikke utestengt fra Europarådet» [Russia not expelled from the Council of Europe], NTB, 11.5.2000.
- «Russland torpederte OSSE-erklæring» [Russia torpedoed OSCE Summit Declaration], NTB, 28.11.2000.
- «Russland utnytter situasjonen» [Russia takes advantage of the situation], Aftenposten, 17.9.2001.
- «Slakter Russiske overgrep» [Deprecates Russian violations], VG, 30.5.2001.
- «Statsrådenes ønsker for år 2000» [the Ministry official's New Year wishes], Aftenposten, 3.1.2000.
- «Stor optimisme etter midtøsten-møte i Moskva» [Great optimism after Middle East meeting in Moscow], Aftenposten, 2.2.2000.
- «Tiltakene mot Østerrike fortsetter» [Measures against Austria continues], NTB, 8.3.2000.
- «Tsjetsjenia kritikken tilhører fortiden i NATO» [Chechnya criticism belongs to the past in NATO], Aftenposten, 27.9.2001.
- «Tsjetsjenias leder ønsker møte med Vollebæk. Russerne sier trolig nei» [Chechnya's leader requests meeting with Vollebæk. Russians will probably refuse], Aftenposten 15.12.1999.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- «Viktig å opprettholde kontakt med Russland»[Important to maintain contact with Russia], NTB, 20.1.2000.
- «Ønsket kandidat»[Wanted candidate], Dagens Næringsliv, 16.3.2000.
- «Østerrike overtar formannskapet» [Austria takes over Chairmanship], NTB, 1.1.2000.
- «Østerrikes nye OSSE-leder inkompetent» [Austria's new OSCE leader is incompetent], NTB, 23.2.2000.

LITERATURE

BOOKS:

- Baddeley, John, 1908: *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, London.
- Baev, Pavel, 2005: «Chechnya and the Russian Military», Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London.
- Blakkisrud, Helge, 2009: «Et Russland i endring», i Even Lange, Helge Pharo, og Øyvind Østerud (red.), *Vendepunkter i norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen*, Oslo.
- Bobrovnikov, Vladimir 2006: «Abu Muslim in Islamic History and Mythology of the Northern Caucasus», in Moshe Gammer and David J. Wasserstein(ed.), *Daghestan and the World of Islam*, Helsinki.
- Bowker, Mike 2005: «Western views of the Chechen conflict». In Richard Sakwa (Ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London.
- Broch, Ingvild, 2004: «Davai po skip kom, brat! Russenorsk – kontaktspråket mellom nordmenn og russere i nord.»[Russo-Norwegian- the contact language between Norwegians and Russians in the North] I Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo.
- Cherkasov, Alexander and Dimitry Grushkin, 2005: «The Chechen Wars and Human Rights in Russia», Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London.
- Dzjakson, Tatjana, 2004: «Norge og Rus-riket i vikingtiden: Normannerspørsmålet»[Norway and the Rus-kingdom in the viking age: the question of the Normans], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo.
- Eriksen, Knut Einar & Pharo, Helge, 1995: *Norsk utenrikspolitikk historie. Kald krig og internasjonalisering 1949-1965*, bind IV, Oslo
- Evangelista, Matthew, 2002: *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?*, Washington D.C..
- Fermann, Gunnar, 2003: «Verktøy i studiet av utenrikspolitikk: begreper, distinksjoner, illustrasjoner», Jon Hovi og Raino Malnes(red.), *Normer og Makt: Innføring i internasjonal politikk*, Oslo.
- Gall, Carlotta and Thomas de Waal, 1998: *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, New York.
- Gakaev, Dzhabrail, 2005: «Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London.
- Gammer, Moshe, 2006: «The Introduction of the Khalidiya and the Qadiriyya into Daghestan in the Nineteenth Century», in Moshe Gammer and David Wasserstein (ed.), *Daghestan and the World of Islam*, Helsinki.
- Hamsun, Knut, 1903: *I æventyrland; Oplevet og drømt i Kaukasien*, København
- Hughes, James, 2005: «The Peace process in Chechnya», in Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London.
- Hughes, James, 2007: *Chechnya: from Nationalism to Jihad*, London
- Hønneland, Geir, 2005: *Barents-brytninger: Norsk områdepolitikk etter den kalde krigen*, Kristiansand. 2005; Vårt bilde av Russerne, Kristiansand

- Hønneland, Geir, 2007: «Vårt bilde av Russerne»[Our perception of the Russians], i Lars Rowe and Geir Hønneland(edt.), *Russlandsbilder: Nye debattinnlegg om naboskap i nordområdene*, Bergen
- Ibrahimov, Harun 2006: «Daghestan and the Near East before Islam», Moshe Gammer and David J. Wasserstein (ed.), *Daghestan and the World of Islam*, Helsinki.
- Jackson, Robert and Georg Sørensen, 2003: *Introduction to international relations Theories and approaches*, Oxford
- Jonson, Lena and Murad Esenov (Ed.), 2000: *Chechnya: The international community and strategies for peace and stability*, Stockholm
- Judd, Lord Frank, 2005: «Afterword», in Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London
- Kan, Alexander og Jens Petter Nielsen, 2004: «Naboer i det høye nord: Tusenårig samkvem og samarbeid» [Neighbours in the High North: A Thousand years of co-existence and cooperation], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*[Norway and Russia: Neighbours through a 1000 years], Oslo
- Kjeldstadli, Knut, 1999: *Fortida er ikke hva den en gang var*, Oslo
- Knutsen, Torbjørn L., 2006: «Politikk og praksis i historisk lys.» [Politics and Practice in Historic Light], i Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann og Ole Jacob Sending(red.), *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis: Aktører og prosesser* [Norwegian Foreign Political Practice: Actors and Processes], Oslo
- Kolstø, Pål, 2000: *Political Construction Sites: Nation-Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*, Oxford.
- Lange, Even, Helge Pharo og Øyvind Østerud (red.), 2009: *Vendepunkter i norsk utenrikspolitikk: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen*, Oslo
- Lie, Jon Harald Sande 2006: «Utvikling, frivillige organisasjoner og utenrikspolitikk», i Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending, *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis: Aktører og prosesser*, Oslo
- Lieven, Anatol, 1998: *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian power*, New Haven
- Luif, Paul, 2003: «Austria: The Burdens of History», in Jeanne A. K. Hey (ed.), *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy*, London
- Matlary, Janne Haaland og Audun Halvorsen, 2006: «Bare når utenriks blir innenriks: Utenrikspolitikken i partiene», i Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann og Ole Jacob Sending (red.), *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis: Aktører og prosesser*, Oslo.
- Mikhailov, Valentin, 2005: «Chechnya and Tatarstan: Differences in search of an explanation», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London.
- Nansens, Fritjof, 1929: *Gjennom Kaukasus til Volga*, Oslo.
- Nekrich, Alexandr M., 1978: *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of Second World War*, New York.
- Nielsen, Jens Petter, 2004: «Norske bilder av Russland i lys av den svensk-norske unionen»[Norwegian perceptions of Russia in the light of the Swedish-Norwegian union], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen (ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo
- Nordsletten, Øyvind og Aleksander Panov, 2004: «Trek fra de diplomatiske forbindelser mellom Norge og Russland»[from the diplomatic relations between Norway and Russia], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*. Oslo
- Nyhamar, Tore, 2003 «Norsk Utenrikspolitikk i en ny tid» [Norwegian foreign policy in a new era], i Jon Hovi og Raino Malnes(edt.), *Normer og Makt: Innføring i internasjonal politikk*[Norms and Power: Introduction to International politics], Oslo.

- Pain, Emil, 2005: «The Chechen War in the Context of Contemporary Russian Politics», in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London.
- Richmond, Walter, 2008: *the Northwest Caucasus: Past, Present, Future*, London.
- Riste, Olav, 2001: *Norway's Foreign Relations: A history*, Oslo.
- Robinson, P. Stuart, 2003: «Internasjonal politisk teori. », i Jon Hovi og Raino Malnes(red.), *Normer og Makt: Innføring i internasjonal politikk*, Oslo.
- Roginskij, Vadim, 2004: «1814 og 1905- to viktige år i Norges historie»[1814 and 1905 – two important years in the history of Norway], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen,(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo.
- Said, Yahia, 2007: «Greed and Grievance in Chechnya», in Mary Kaldor, Terry Lynn Karl and Yahia Said(ed), *Oil Wars*, London.
- Sakwa, Richard (Ed.), 2005: *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London.
- Schrader, Tatjana, 2004: «Pomorhandelen.»[The Pomor-trade] I Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo.
- Skagestad, Odd Gunnar, 2000: «How can the international community contribute to peace and stability in and around Chechnya? A pessimistic reply.», *Chechnya: The International Community and Strategies for Peace and Stability*, Lena Jonson and Murad Esenov (ed.), Stockholm.
- Skogan, John Kristen, 2003: «Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk: En oversikt.», i Jon Hovi og Raino Malnes (ed.), *Normer og Makt: Innføring i internasjonal politikk*, Oslo.
- Soleim, Marianne Neerland, 2004: «Sovjetiske krigsfanger i Norge 1941 – 1945[Soviet prisoner of war in Norway 1941-1945]», i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo.
- Suprun, Mikhail, 2004: «Frigjøringen av Øst-Finnmark i 1944»[the Liberation of Eastern Finnmark in 1944], i Daniela Büchten, Tatjana Dzjakson and Jens Petter Nielsen(ed.), *Norge – Russland: Naboer gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo.
- Tamnes, Rolf, 1995: *Norsk utenrikspolitikks historie, bind VI, Oljealder 1965-1995*, Oslo.
- Thune, Henrik og Torgeir Larsen, 2000: «Utenrikspolitik uten Software: En teori om omdømme, populisme og andre politiske trekkrefter i små staters utenrikspolitik.», i *Grenser for alt: Kritiske perspektiver på norsk utenrikspolitik*, Oslo.
- Thune, Henrik, Torgeir Larsen og Gro Holm, 2006: «Budbringerens utenriksmakt? Medias innflytelse i norske utenrikspolitiske beslutningsprosesser», Birgitte Kjos Fonn, Iver B. Neumann og Ole Jacob Sending (red.), *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis: Aktører og prosesser*, Oslo.
- Tishkov, Valery, 1997: *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London.
- Tvedt, Terje, 2009: *Utviklingshjelp, utenrikspolitik og makt: Den norske modellen*, Oslo.
- Vikør, Knut S., 2002: *Islam: Ei faktabok*, Oslo.
- Wagnsson, Charlotte, 2000: *Russian Political Language and Public Opinion on the West, NATO and Chechnya: Securitisation theory reconsidered*, Stockholm.
- Ware, Robert Bruce, 2005: «A multitude of Evils: Mythology and Political Failure in Chechnya», in Richard Sakwa, *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London.
- Waage, Hilde Henriksen, 2009: «Fredspolitik i Midtøsten.», i Even Lange, Helge Pharo and Øyvind Østerud(red.), *Vendepunkter i norsk utenrikspolitik: Nye internasjonale vilkår etter den kalde krigen*, Oslo.
- Waage, Hilde Henriksen, 2000: «Norwegians? Who needs Norwegians?» *Explaining the Oslo Back Channel: Norway's Political Past in the Middle East*, Oslo.

PUBLICATIONS:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Flikke, Geir, 2002: «Gorbachev and Yeltsin as leaders» and «Russia's stillborn democracy? From Gorbachev to Yeltsin», *Internasjonal Politikk* 2002, 3: 371-377.
- Khordarkovsky, Michael, 1999: «Of Christianity, Enlightenment, and Colonialism: Russia in the North Caucasus, 1550-1800», *the Journal of Modern History* 1999, 2: 394-430
- Kolstø, Pål, 2006: «The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States», in *Journal of Peace Research*, 2006, 6: 723-740.
- Lapidus, Gail 2008: «Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya», *International Security* 1998, 1: Richmond.
- Lodgaard, Sverre, 2002: «Helhetsperspektiver på norsk utenrikspolitikk» [Overall view on Norwegian Foreign Policy], *Internasjonal Politikk*, 2002, 3: 257-283.
- Lodgaard, Sverre, 2007: «Helhetsperspektiver på norsk utenrikspolitikk» [Overall view on Norwegian Foreign Policy], *Internasjonal Politikk*, 2007, 2: 279-288.
- Laugen, Torunn, 2001: «Mot et kaldere klima? Utviklingen av det bilaterale forholdet mellom Norge og Russland på 1990-tallet», *Internasjonal politikk*, 2001, 1: 91-109.
- Noreng, Øystein, 2002: «Golfen og Oljemarkedet ett år etter 11. september» [The Gulf and the oil market a year after 9/11], *Internasjonal Politikk*, 2002, 3: 285-317.
- Sverdrup, Ulf, 2007: «Norsk Utenrikspolitikk i en ny tid: Noen randbemerkninger» [Norwegian Foreign Policy in a new era: some Marginal Notes], *Internasjonal Politikk*, 2007, 4: 91-102.
- Tamnes, Rolf, 1986: «Ettpartistat, småstat, og særinteresser. Tre skoler i norsk sikkerhetspolitikk», i *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift*, 1986, 3:
- Weller, Mark, 1999: «The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo», *International Affairs* 1999, 2: 211-251.

OTHER:

- Austbø, Anne Marie (ed), 2005: *Whose Responsibility? Protection of Chechen Internally displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees*. Report by the Norwegian Refugee Council, Oslo
- Vollebæk, Knut, 1998: «The Norwegian OSCE chairmanship», Speech at the OSCE Seminar in Oslo 22.10.1998, *UD informasjon Oslo*
- Haga, Åslaug, 1998: Statement to the Carnegie Endowment for Peace on «Norway and Russia- a northern connection», by State Secretary, *UD informasjon Oslo*
- Helland, Siv 2006: *Genres of the Wars in Chechnya: An Analysis of Story Structure and Linguistic Action in Narratives on the Russian-Chechen Conflict*, Master Thesis, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø.
- Wilhelmsen, Julie, 2004: *When Separatists become Islamists: The Case of Chechnya*, FFI report – 2004/00445.